

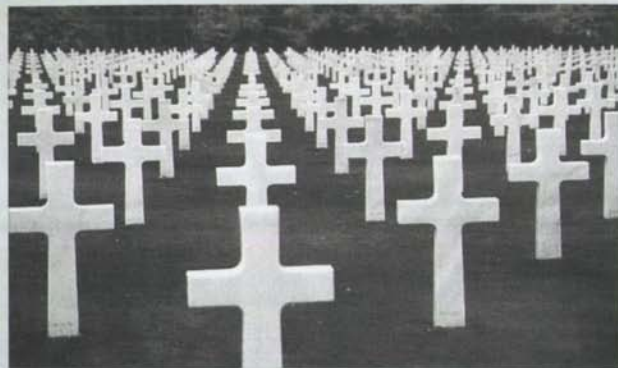
# The BULGE BUGLE

VOLUME XV NUMBER 4

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

NOVEMBER 1996

## A PLACE OF ADMONITION FOR MANKIND



# WAR GRAVES

By Camille P. Kohn



**"When Will Mankind Finally Understand?"**

**T**he holocaust of 1939-1945 is the greatest disaster ever to visit mankind, the consequence of which exceeds the human power of imagination even today.

The war started on 1 September 1939 at 5:45 a.m. and ended on 7 May 1945 at 2:41 a.m. with the unconditional capitulation of those who had been the cause of it. The hostilities spanned a period of 2,075 days or 49,800 hours.

When the balance is made up, the Second World War is unequalled in the history of mankind. More than 55,000,000 deaths as a result of hostilities, political racist, and religious persecution or captivity!

As a result of this destructive struggle between nations approximately 1.125 people died every hour; endless landscapes of graves came into creation, silent witnesses of the

many millions of victims.

Millions upon millions of innocent people, voluntarily or involuntarily, became involved in this war, in so far as they were not already completely swept along in it. To consign all of this to oblivion would be a terrible insult. It would mean that a common crime would be added to the list of crimes already committed!

The Blitzkrieg in Poland in the year of 1939 was the first halting place in the triumphal march of the Nazi raids through Europe. As the springtime of 1940 was awakening, the West was horrifyingly awakened when Hitler, with his omnipotent army struck, and within the space of a few weeks, swallowed up France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. The great fall of the 20th century had begun. A new reign of terror dominated the peaceful people of these

*(Continued on Page 8)*

**15-16 December  
Ceremonies**



**Re-commemoration of the Urn of earth from Bastogne at the National Archives Rotunda, 1 PM 15 Dec followed by a commemoration at the National Holocaust Museum at 2 PM. In the evening there will be a banquet at the Sheraton Hotel in Arlington. 16 Dec there will be the wreath laying at the Tombs of the Unknowns at Arlington.**

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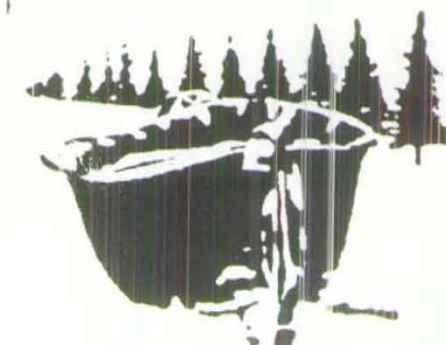
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**CONTACT THE CHAPTER IN YOUR  
AREA. YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID.**

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## President's Message

With the memory of our annual reunion in Hyannis still fresh in my mind, I would like to thank you for the confidence you have extended me by re-electing me to serve as your president for the coming year. I also want to thank all members of the reunion committee for the countless hours you put into making it one of our best. And special thanks to Administrative Director Nancy Monson and Lynne Eldridge, for their hard work before, during and after, the reunion. A vote of thanks to all.

As I reflect on the reunion, I have to praise that New England spirit displayed by our VBOB committee in that historical section of our country. They really put on "a great show." It was a bit awesome to witness the interest demonstrated by the people of the Cape Cod area in our reunion, and in the dedication ceremonies for our newest monument.

I don't want to forget the Barnstable Township Police Department. They provided the motorcycle escort for the small convoy bringing Ambassador Berns from the airport to the hotel, during the peak of the evening drive time. Then they provided the Color Guard for our banquet. Well done, officers!

If I may, I would like to share some post-reunion thoughts with you. These are some ideas you could use to help us keep growing as a national organization, and in your chapters.

I had many opportunities to talk with members from all over the country while in Hyannis. Members from California, Texas, Wisconsin, Florida, and states in between, all gave me the same message: a busy chapter, with active members, is our best advertisement. Keeping members interested, and active, draws new members.

Here are some ideas I came away with:

- It would be great to have representatives from all of our chapters at our 52nd Anniversary events, December 15-16 in Washington. But for those unable to be there, I urge you to plan special ceremonies in your chapter's area. It could be wreath-laying at a national cemetery, or at a veterans' memorial in the center of town; or how about a special luncheon or dinner commemorating the start of the Bulge, December 16, 1944. Then, let your local newspaper, radio, TV stations know about it, and request coverage. This is a special time for us, and for countless families in your area who may be mourning a father, brother, cousin or uncle. Let them know you remember.
- Start planning now for VE Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, July 4th, and December 16, 1997. Plant a tree with a metal plaque in a prominent location for Arbor Day. The more members you have involved, the more great ideas you will come up with.

It is up to us to find ways to keep the memory of the Ardennes alive along with Yorktown, Gettysburg, San Juan Hill and the Meuse-Argonne--American victories that were part of the heritage we grew up with.

I would also like to suggest that as you walk or drive around your communities, you think about a likely location to place a

plaque or monument in memory of the living and the dead who fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

Think about it--discuss the various ideas/possibilities at your meetings. Then please let me know what we can do to help you make it happen. You know we now have our memorials in three states, wouldn't it be great to have one in your town, your state?

Impossible? So was fighting in two feet of snow, sleet, and freezing rain. We did it, and won. We can do this, too. Why not make it your chapter's goal for our 55th Anniversary--December 16, 1999-January 25, 2000?



**Stanley Wojtusik**  
VBOB President

## CHAPTER UP-DATE

**Grover C. Twiner**

### Vice President for Chapters and Regions

On July 13, 1996, the first regional meeting was held in Toledo, Ohio. Representatives from chapters in Indiana (2); Illinois (0); Ohio (3 of 4); Michigan (1 of 2); and Kentucky (0) were in attendance. This constitutes Region IV.

Stuart McDonnell (Northern Indiana Chapter) and Don Ratliff (North Central Ohio Chapter) were elected coordinators for that region. Various items were discussed and certainly much good will flow from the meeting.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the various chapters for their assistance in doing what we've done for the past three years. I set my target at 50 chapters when there were only 28--that and more has been accomplished. We now have 52 chapters. The most recent one was Staten Island, New York, under the able leadership of Mrs. Ella Bing, of that city.

I'm sure my successor Richard Schlenker will do an outstanding job in continuing the growth of VBOB.

Again, I wish to thank all of you for your assistance to me in all my endeavors with VBOB. After five years on and around the top hot seat, my wife, Mary, and I will begin a sabbatical on December 16, 1996. We plan to do those things we have postponed during the last five or six years. You may see us show up anywhere and at any time. Thanks to all and God Bless.

## CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL TO SEE IF YOUR DUES ARE DUE!

You can save us precious time and money if you will check the mailing label used to mail this newsletter. Above your last name is the date on which your dues were due. If your dues are past due or will expire soon, please submit your \$15.00 annual fee to save us the expense of mailing a reminder.

We appreciate your attention to this matter.

### IN THIS ISSUE

- |                                      |                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3. President's Message               | 15. Newman's Call at BOB |
| 4. Letters to the Editor             | 16. Bulge Incidents      |
| 7. How About You                     | 23. Leopoldville         |
| 8. War Games (cont'd.)               | 27. Books/Reunions       |
| 9. Our Tradition Lives On            | 28. Cape Cod Reunion     |
| 10. 87th Division                    | 29. Bulge Reenactment    |
| 11. 50th Anniversary                 | 30. Certificates         |
| 12. Members Speak Out                | 31. Items for Sale       |
| 14. How Intelligent is Intelligence? |                          |

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## U.S. TACTICS

In response to the letter of criticism by the German captain on U.S. tactics, I must offer the following event.

On December 22, 1944, the rifle company I was attached to, as an instrument corporal with a heavy weapons platoon of HMGS, and a platoon of 702nd Tank Battalion, jumped off at 0600 from the vicinity of Brouch, Luxembourg, and advanced through the forest to our first objective. Meeting no resistance, we soon found a small group of men from the 28th Division. At 1145 we received small arms fire which was soon taken care of. These Germans had American equipment, rations, and other gear taken from our troops.

When we came to the edge of the woods, we were at the top of a ridge overlooking a small valley outside the Village of Fuelin. Below us, German horse drawn column of carts and wagons and men (artillery supplies). The men were standing in groups conversing and offering an excellent target for our HMGS and tank fire.

Our platoon had only three HGMS but we had a jeep over-loaded with additional ammo. We very calmly set up our guns. When we began to fire the tanks came out of the woods and added to our fire with their 50's and cannons as they started down the road. The HMGS raked the column. The riflemen advanced with the tanks and mopped up what remained. Horses men and wagons were scattered all over the roads and fields.

Our 1st Battalion had captured Fuelin, Neider Fuelin, and Ober Fuelin by 1500. Not bad for our first day out. As you can see errors were made on both sides.

Vernon M. Frazier  
80 INF D 319 INF D

## GET INVOLVED

I was so impressed with [the Pledge of Allegiance article] published in the May issue of *The Bulge Bugle* that I marked it off for reference and it has been on the top of my desk ever since then. I did not know how to express my thanks and compliment you on such an outstanding article covering the emotions and bewilderment of so many citizens today. I have enclosed a few of my letters on this problem. I still do not know how to find the appropriate words to express my sincere gratitude and admiration. Usually, I have no difficulty writing letters, as you can see by the enclosed.

I'm sure you have said just what so many of us are wondering today. The problem is not only trying to figure out what happened to our society's sense of duty, honor and patriotism, but, what can we do to correct the situation. Your comments are a constructive step in that direction.

...I have at least made an effort to do what I could and I'm still trying. You certainly boosted my spirits. I felt a bond of mutual concern and frustration as I read the article. I hope that you were able to motivate many of your readers. I wish you continued success in your endeavors.

Anthony B. Brehler  
76 INF D 385 INF 1 BN A

*[Anthony enclosed several newspaper clippings and letters written in defense of patriotism, etc. It's great see someone take steps to express displeasure with those who apparently have no such feelings. Anthony's articles encourage everyone to GET INVOLVED when they are unhappy with what they read, see, or hear.]*

## THANK GOD

...I went across the English Channel on that boat [MV LEOPOLDVILLE] as an infantry replacement the night of November 10, 1944. I left Southampton with other replacements the night of November 7, 1944, bound for LeHavre, France on the *Brigadier*. While waiting to make up a convoy, the *Brigadier* ran her bow through the side of a liberty ship. So we were taken back to Southampton. Then on November 10, we were put aboard the *Leopoldville*...

In Holland I was assigned to Company K, 335th Regiment, 84th Division, as a mortar gunner. I saw combat with the 9th Army, then with the 1st Army during the Battle of the Bulge. On Christmas Eve, at Rochefort,

Belgium, I was wounded and taken prisoner of war.  
Thank God, I wasn't on the *Leopoldville* that night.

James H. Harris  
84 INF D 335 INF K

## WHY CCB TO THE 7TH ARMORED?

Following the discussion between John Durba and Lloyd Jones, I have a reply to Jones. He asks why only CCB of the 7th Armored received the Presidential Citation. The answer follows:

The actions of both divisions were praiseworthy; the 101st on the flank, and the 7th Armored in the center. The actions of the 7th Armored were during a press blackout; those of the 101st caught the public imagination when the blackout was lifted. The tale of a surrounded garrison gave a needed lift to the U.S. public. Alert to this, the 101st started the trail to receive the PUC, or DUC as it was then called. No such action was taken by the 7th Armored.

In 1947 the Belgians completed a study of the war and discovered the vital role played by the defense of St. Vith, disrupting the German center by keeping them from using the road and rail net for their supplies. Von Mantueffel mentions this as a growing factor in his loss. The day that Montgomery withdrew the 7th was the day the sun came out and air power clobbered the backed-up supply trains. From their study, the Belgians then twice awarded the Croix de Guerre and its fourragere to the division. But they asked why the U.S. had never recognized the vital role of the 7th Armored.

So a small team headed by Generals Hasbrouck and Clarke started the file to award the PUC to the division, plus a combat command of the 9th Armored Division, plus the 275th Field Artillery Battalion (which had been the only artillery in the area when the 7th's artillery was cut off by the Malmedy Massacre and other artillery withdrew, in some cases leaving their guns).

The response this late in the day was that PUC's were no longer being given to division-sized units, and to resubmit for one combat command. So we rewrote the recommendation, the generals having decided that because CCB was first on the ground at St. Vith and because a large number of units had rotated through CCB's control during the battle, CCB should be the vehicle. It was recognized that this was unfair to CCA and several other units, but the Army had decided the issue.

As a sidelight, I was on the General Staff at the time and had the pleasure of presenting this case to the Vice Chief of Staff for decision. Having disapproved earlier papers on other units, he enthusiastically approved this one. Everyone started to chuckle. General Collins, baffled, looked around and said, "Am I missing something? Why are you all smiling?" At that point I swung my right shoulder toward him with its 7th Armored patch. He joined the laughter when he saw it.

William A. Knowlton  
7 ARMDD 87 RCN SQDN

## DOG BISCUITS, TOO

...Mr. Langford whose letter appeared in the August issue, may I say: Mr. Langford I've eaten meat and vegetable stew or hash from one can and so called "dog biscuits," candy, 3 cigarettes, toilet paper and Nescafe or lemonade from the other can!! I was a proud member of Headquarters Battery, 899th Field Artillery Battalion and attached to Company A, 1st Battalion, 291st Infantry as a field lineman ... a forward observer who called for fire missions from our 105 howitzers where the infantry needed it. While there, we ate what they ate!!

One week in combat, a shell hit our OP, killing 1st LT. David Shaffner an artillery observer and that same shell caused Sgt. Herman Meier to lose the sight of one eye. Shortly after that Cpl. Wadley Hunter and I were trying to splice a line at Grand-Halleux, Belgium, where Cp. Hunter was killed by a sniper. These three men were from the field artillery and I shared both "C" and "D" rations with them.

We field artillery men received no combat infantry pay nor were we allowed the honor to wear the combat infantry badge, yet we were on line with our assigned infantry until they were relieved and when they went back on line so did we. Please...do some homework before such statements are made.

Frank C. Pagliuca  
899 FA BN HQ

*{Continued on Page 5}*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from Page 4)

### RE-READ MY LETTER

Sydney O. Johnson's opinionated letter in the August 1996 *Bulge Bugle* would be good for laughs, except for his...appraisal of the importance of the relief of Bastogne during the Bulge. My refutation of his nonsense can be met by re-reading my letter in the August 1995 issue of *The Bulge Bugle*.

If Johnson was attempting to rile former combatants of Patton's 3rd Army, then he is guilty of extremely bad taste. Third Army casualties and survivors contributed greatly to the successful "breaking" of the Bulge and the relief of Bastogne was a costly and major part of that monumental effort. Asinine comments...will not diminish that evaluation.

Ahren Jacobson  
6 ARMDD 50 AIB A

### OOPS

I noted in the recent *Bugle* a letter from George Schneider discussing various errors and omissions. He made a small error himself. The boys that got it at Malmedy were with B Battery, 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion. I was with B Battery, 16th Field Artillery Observation Battalion, VIII Corps, and probably took basic at Fort Sill with some of those victims.

Very few people knew about these field artillery observation battalions and they wondered what we did since we had no artillery pieces. We flash ranged and sound ranged on enemy artillery and some of our OPs were way up front. Of all the history and accounts of the Bulge, there is little or no mention of these battalions, which were assigned one to a corps. Just thought I'd set the record straight.

John H. Grant, Jr.  
16 FAO BN B

### BOY, DO WE GET LETTERS

*(The following letter was received from a member in response to a dues reminder. Obviously, he is very unhappy with us (or with the world in general). On the envelope he used a postage meter frank from a previous letter he had received (I don't think it was from us) which was dated July 7, 1993. I'll save you some time by translating (from the dictionary) some of his words. (They appear in italics immediately following the word.)*

By rights you should change the name of your inane publication to The Bulge Bungle. Such would be far more germane [*pertinent*]. (Given the strong probability that you did not appreciate it, this comprises a paronomastic [*pun or play on words*] brilliancy.) Not one single person, military or civilian, ever heard--let alone saw--one of those brazen abominations in the Ardennes, whereas an ubiquity of bungles obtained [*unable to translate meaning*]. Every one of us survivors, who assiduously risked his ass for somebody else's wealth and/or property would testify to this effect. Irrefragible [*unable to be refuted*], eye-witness evidence could be adduced.

In any event, for any number of reasons any one of which would be sufficiently valid, I have decided not to re-up. Please, therefore, include me out.

PS Forgive the photocopy: I refuse to waste my superb originals on mere mortals.

PSS Dig the anarchist (free, what else postage) achieved by using a contiguous indicia.

*(Anyway, that's a look into our mail box. You can't please everyone. We're not printing his name, address, or unit because we thought it was unnecessary. (Although we really should.) We thought you would get a chuckle out of this.)*

### CHOCOLATE DISCOVERED

I hope you have room for one more rations story.

I was raised during the depression and my mother used to make ice cream by using vanilla, canned milk, sugar and snow.

In January, 1944, the ten-in-one rations included a sack of chocolate. I guess it was to be made into a drink. No one in my platoon, Company A, 1st Platoon, 712 Tank Battalion, that I knew of liked it. I thought I

would try it in ice cream. I used the chocolate, canned milk and sugar, then heated it to melt the sugar, then added the snow which we had plenty of. It turned out pretty good.

No other tankers used theirs so it was easy to get more chocolate, until one day I was making ice cream when a couple of fellows from another tank walked in. We had to share it with them. They spread the word and that was the last time we could get any chocolate from any other tank.

Charles M. Vorhees  
712 TK BN A

### 11TH ARMORED DIVISION TAKES EXCEPTION

The surviving officers and enlisted men of the 11th Armored Division take great exception to the unwarranted and adverse remarks made in the article by Mitchell Kaidy in "General George Patton and the 87th Division."

The first caustic remark made about the 11th Armored Division was that the division was scheduled to arrive in the Ardennes early on December 29th and, though the 87th got in at 0630 that day, the 11th didn't arrive until 2200. I don't know where the 87th had to start from, but the 11th traveled over 500 miles in four days through bitter cold, rain and snow to the banks of the Meuse River. When we received orders to move out from Rennes, the last of our units were still in South Hampton and had to catch up with us. This was one of the longest, most grueling and successful forced marches yet recorded in the history of armored actions.

Then comes the statement taken from General Middleton's (Commander of the VIIIth Corps) biography, published by Louisiana State University, that "The 11th Armored, absorbing heavy casualties to both men and machines, faltered and pulled back and that the 87th was able to step in and take over most of the armored division's vacated front." Nowhere in the 11th's After Action Report, which was declassified in 1994, does it prove this to be true.

While the 87th on our left flank, was pushing toward Libramont, Tillet and St. Hubert, our CCA was pushing toward Rechrival Hubermont, Millomont and Rechimont; CCB was pushing toward Chenogne and Mande St. Etienne; and the CCR was advancing through Magerotte, Pinsamont and Acul. During this time the CCR continued defense of division's left flank, maintaining contact with the 87th. At no time did the 87th have to step in and take over most of the armored division's vacated front. In fact, elements of our division were ordered to be prepared to move in a westerly direction to assist the 87th should there be a counterattack from St. Hubert.

From December 30, 1944, through January 3, 1995, until relieved by the 17th Airborne Division, the 11th Armored Division, in its first appearance in battle had out-gutted and out-gunned three tough veteran German units, the 3rd and 15th Panzer Grenadier Divisions, the latter one of the famed Afrika Korps plus the elite Remer Brigade comprising selected personnel of the most flagrant type of young and brutal Nazi. Remer had been chief of Hitler's personal bodyguards. Against superior forces, we had smashed the German effort to sever the Bastogne-Neufchateau highway supply route, pushed the German army back six miles during five bitterly cold days, cleared over 30 square miles of rugged terrain, and liberated more than a dozen towns.

The 11th was the first unit to link up with the 2nd Armored Division of the 1st Army on January 16th, thereby closing the gap in the bulge.

In Robert E. Merriam's book, *Dark December*, he writes that the division was to contribute hugely to the decisive Battle of the Bulge. Its gallant and impetuous assault to assure American retention of the vital road-center of Bastogne was to result in the destruction of a great part of Von Runstedt's hordes which, otherwise, on withdrawal to the East would later have manned the Seigfried Line. As was declared afterwards by General Middleton, the VIIIth Corps commander, the Thunderbolts saved that critical area and the attendant travail and confusion which would have prevailed had it fallen to the now desperate Germans.

The 11th spearheaded General Patton's 3rd Army advances throughout the war. We were the first unit to enter Austria leading the 3rd Army linkup with the Russians and took 76,229 prisoners, more than twice the number captured by the entire American Army during WW I.

I am sure that the 87th served gallantly in action, but it is hoped that the foregoing documented facts will forever quiet those who would unjustly criticize the combat conduct and record of the 11th Armored Division.

Edward A. Bergh  
11 ARMDD 55 AIB A

(Continued on Page 6)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from Page 5)

### A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE GOES A LONG WAY

Thanks for the piece on the Maryland school Pledge of Allegiance scenario. So much of this is going on in all phases of our dear country. *Readers' Digest* recently had a story wherein some person went to the local library to seek information on a video covering our big battle. When approaching the receptionist asking for the video "The Battle of the Bulge," he was referred to the health and nutrition section of the library. So you see there is little knowledge of what we went through.

In my rifle Company B, 345th Regiment, 87th Division, 29 of our original 200 men came home--many of the 29 wounded like me. I spent seven months recuperating in three hospitals as a result of my wounds and paralysis.

The forces out there for diversity, forgetting our heritage, will have their way unless people like you and me don't continue to meet them head on. The melting pot of our past has slowly become a mosaic, wherein it loses its identity gained from its basically European roots.

Joseph F. Zimmer  
87 INFD 345 INF B

*[Your story about the library reminded me of an incident that I had. I hope I haven't put it in this newsletter before, but it is funny enough to repeat even if I did.]*

*When I first began putting together information for mailing a press release for VBOB, I was trying to compile a list of newspapers to carry the release. I wanted to make sure that the release didn't get lost in the shuffle at some of the bigger newspapers so I initiated a phone call to some to see where the release should be directed.*

*I called "USA TODAY" and advised the young lady that I had a press release to be issued from the Battle of the Bulge and asked to whom it should be addressed. She responded, "Oh, yes. Just a moment and I'll put you through to the right person."*

*A few minutes passed and a pleasant voice on the other end responded, "Food Editor." I knew right then that I had a bigger public relations job to do than could be done. Anyway, we keep trying.*

### JEEPS, PEEPS & FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I agree with Sidney Johnson, of the 3rd Armored Division (August, 1996, *Bugle*) that, in 2nd Armored Division as well, the small military cars that many now call "jeeps" were called "peeps" in 1944-45. The battalion HQ to which I was assigned had two peep drivers. Jeeps were larger command cars.

I have to add a word of praise for one brand of "C" rations--the meat and beans. I actually liked this food, though I was probably a minority of one. Before the men in white coats come for me, let me hastily add that I had a healthy dislike for other "C" rations and for "K" rations--except for the cheese and coffee. Ten-in-Ones were a delicacy--when you could get them.

Bob Bragdon  
2 ARMDD 66 AIR 1 BN HQ

### DON'T FORGET TO DO YOUR HISTORY

Although I am not a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge (or a veteran of any battle), I would like to receive your publication.... I am a sixth-grade teacher in California and I am very interested in World War II.

My uncle, George F. Cook, of Jacksonville, Florida, is a life time member of your organization and introduced me to your publication. I have enjoyed it myself and have also taken stories from it and used them in my classroom.

I realize that you and the other veterans of World War II have paid their dues for America's freedom many times over. I am appreciative of your many sacrifices. Unfortunately, as a teacher I am acutely aware that you are still desperately needed in our country today.

I urge you and all of your readers to write down or tape record your experiences in VBOB (or other battles). If you can, please tell your family of how and where you served. Volunteer to go into classrooms of private or public schools and talk about what you can recall of your times in service to our country. Get together a Veterans Day ceremony that can

be presented in schools.

For one reason or another, school children are taught very little about our Constitution, Bill of Rights, America's liberties, veterans of any war, or even why we pledge our flag. There is no mention of you in many history books. Our kids grow up in a culture that tells them "America sucks." I plead with you and your readers to help us remember the truths about this nation.

Sheila J. Hall

## BATTLEFIELD CEMETERIES BOOKLET AVAILABLE

ROY W. HOLMES, CHIEF HISTORIAN FOR THE 146TH COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, sent us information regarding military cemeteries in other countries. The booklet is so detailed that we thought rather than duplicate parts of it, it would be nice for you to have the entire booklet. A quick phone call to The American Battle Monuments Commission indicated they would be happy to send you a copy. Write to: American Battle Monuments Commission, 20 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Suite 5127, Washington, DC 20314-0300. Ask for "American Memorials and Overseas Military Cemeteries" booklet.

Available to immediate family members of those buried in the overseas military cemeteries is a black and white photograph of headstones and sections of the Tablets of the Mission on which the serviceman's name is engraved; large color lithographs of the cemeteries and memorials on which photographs of the appropriate headstones or Tablets of the Missing are mounted; and arrangements for floral decoration of grave and memorial sites and provision to the donor of a photograph of the decoration in place.

As the American Battle Monuments Commission is responsible for raising the funds for the World War II Monument to be erected in Washington, DC, you might wish to include a contribution for the Monument. (They did not ask for a contribution and will send you the brochure without one.)

Roy, along with others, has also made arrangements to have a floral tribute for a soldier buried overseas at a very reasonable price. Please send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you would like to receive the order form.

## UP-DATE ON WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

Six finalists have been named for the design of the World War II Memorial. They were chosen from more than 400 applicants in an open, national competition, and based on their preliminary visions for the memorial. These visions express their design philosophy and intent for this important landmark.

The finalists will now further develop their design concepts for Stage II of the competition. The designs will be evaluated by a distinguished Design Jury which will make recommendations to an evaluation board. Announcement of the winning design is expected later this year.

This memorial will recognize World War II as the defining event of the 20th Century and honor all those who served in the military and on the home front. The memorial will also educate future generations on the spirit, sacrifice and commitment of the America people bonded together in a just and common cause.

Dedication of the memorial is projected for Veterans Day in the year 2000.

We'll try to keep you informed of developments as we learn about them. **This is your memorial.**

## HOW ABOUT YOU?

*As you read the following letter, please keep in mind the fact that, even though you may not be affected, many of the buddies you served with may be.*

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Lawrence C. Perkins died Easter Sunday, 1996. What is so special about that, you may ask? He can't be buried.

Lawrence joined the Army in 1943, when he was 20 years old. He was sent overseas with the 106th Division as a staff sergeant. While in Belgium he was captured by German troops during the Battle of the Bulge.

As a prisoner, Lawrence was marched for three days in the coldest winter in Belgium history, with no food and not enough warm clothing. He slept in snow banks.

Lawrence and his fellow soldiers were loaded into cattle cars that were so crowded that they couldn't sit or lie down. Again, no food, water, or toilets. This went on for three days. Upon arrival at Bad Orb, Germany, he was taken to Stalag 9B. He was fed daily there: a thin soup with vegetable peelings, and, if he was lucky a worm or other bug. He ate them. He had to.

On good days, he might also receive a piece of bread made with saw dust. He ate that too. He also ate the skin from the inside of his mouth and chewed on pieces of tar from the barracks roof. He was starving.

He was beaten, teased, and tortured. He was made to watch as his comrades were beaten or shot.

Finally on March 31, 1945, he was liberated. Lawrence was a changed man. This brave soldier who voluntarily signed up to fight for our freedom, was not the same man that my mother had married. He weighed 60 pounds. He was terribly sick with bronchitis, dysentery, and whatever ungodly thoughts he had running through his head. He was awarded three Bronze Stars and various other awards.

Illness and mental anguish was with him for the rest of his life. He developed emphysema, his teeth rotted out, and he couldn't stand to see a man with long hair and beard because it made him feel like he was crawling with lice again.

His medical problems finally took over when he was 47. After a lengthy battle, our Veterans Administration retired him on medical disability.

Lawrence got a decent compensation, but, was it enough to make up for a ruined body, hellish nightmares, guilt, and depression he lived with 24 hours a day? I think not.

Lawrence is not alone. I have met many disabled veterans and POW's who are just like him. Men who gave their lives for the USA. Now the USA has given Lawrence the biggest insult anyone could imagine. They won't bury him because there are no funds to develop burial plots in many of the national cemeteries.

There was plenty of money for Ron Brown; there was plenty of money to honor those murdered in Oklahoma City.

I am very sorry for those people and their families, and do not feel that they should be forgotten either. But, unlike Lawrence, they signed up for "safe jobs." They had no reason to expect danger in the work place.

Lawrence signed up for war. To fight for our freedom. To

go into the frightening unknown. All for our future.

Now we can honor his last wish: the glory of a full military funeral. The taps. The 21-gun salute. A place of honor in the National Cemetery in Springfield, Missouri. His remains must lie in a vault at the mortuary. Is this where we must go to pay our respects to a brave and fallen soldier on Memorial Day?

I am ashamed. I am hurt. And, I am saddened that he is forgotten.

His loving daughter,  
Susan L. Harris

*[Susan enclosed several articles which appeared in local papers. It seems that the cemetery stopped casket burials because a segment of land to be developed became water-logged and unuseable for in-ground burials. Therefore, many veterans (like Mr. Perkins) opted to be cremated. Accommodating cremated remains also stopped. Thus, Mr. Perkins' remains wait at the funeral home for something to be done. The money to prepare the land has not been allocated. It's tied up in the budget battle.*

*I wrote to my Senator and Congressmen. How about you? It would be helpful if you wrote too. Somewhere down the line this same horrible experience may happen to someone you know and maybe someone you love. Following is the response from one of my Senators.]*

JOHN WARNER  
SENATOR

ARMED SERVICES  
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS  
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY  
SMALL BUSINESS

United States Senate

September 12, 1996

Ms. Nancy C. Monson  
Administrative Director  
Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc.  
P.O. Box 11129  
Arlington, Virginia 22210-2129

Dear Ms. Monson:

Thank you for contacting my office regarding the lack of burial space at Springfield National Cemetery in Missouri.

I, too, am very concerned about this situation and in response to your letter my office contacted the Department of Veterans Affairs. We were informed that this problem is not confined to the cemetery in Springfield, but is a growing concern nationally.

To help alleviate this problem, the VA funding bill for Fiscal Year 1997 currently being considered by Congress, appropriates nearly \$80 million for the National Cemetery System, and another \$11.6 million for Arlington National Cemetery. This money would help cover cemeterial expenses and operations, as well as the improvement and maintenance of the cemeteries.

Please be assured that I will continue to work with the VA as we attempt to resolve this problem. It is essential that we provide veterans with the honorable burial services which they deserve.

Thank you again for contacting my office.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,  
*John Warner*  
John Warner

JW:tlp

DR. RUSSELL GERRARD OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20540-1007  
202-224-2000

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES OFFICE

SENATE OFFICE CENTER  
WORLD WAR II CENTER  
20540-1007  
202-224-2000

SENATE OFFICE CENTER  
400 EAST MICHIGAN STREET  
ANN ARBOR, MI 48106-0000  
313-763-2000

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## WAR GRAVES

(Continued from Page 1)

countries. The seeds of violence were germinated!

A struggle emerged between all peoples and nations against the escalation of terror. Battles were fought from the stratosphere to the deepest seabed. Airplanes, ships and ground forces fought for supremacy! No statistics can even begin to make the size and suffering of this war visible.

The long battle for Stalingrad was the turning point in the war. With this crushing battle the end of the Second World War was initiated. The end was expedited by the last great battle in the West: **the Battle of the Bulge in 1944-1945!** As a result of this senseless act of desperation by the Germans, which was neither strategically nor morally justifiable, macabre necropolises emerged: **enormous military cemeteries, spread throughout the Benelux countries. Margraten in the Netherlands, Henri-Chapelle and Neuville-en-Condroz in Belgium, and Hamm in Luxembourg. A great multitude of grief-stricken mothers and fathers slipped into a quagmire of suffering and acquiescence.**

Of God's acres in the Benelux countries, those cemeteries which are inextricably bound up with the American people are visited most frequently. Armand Blau has registered details of these military cemeteries and has made a professional report on the subject by giving a summary of the emergence and development of these cemeteries in the last few decades and has now made the report public. With this report Mr Blau has produced an authoritative piece of work. He has entered a completely new area and has excavated details from the historic past which were unknown up to now. American military cemeteries can basically be distinguished only by their location and the number of dead.

With their enormous number of graves which exceed the imagination and the way they are situated, these cemeteries give the visitor an impression of perfect beauty and peaceful harmony. They have an overwhelming and lasting power of expression, as if they wish to proclaim: **"WHEN WILL MANKIND FINALLY UNDERSTAND?"** They even overawe contemporaries, who have no knowledge of the war, by the grandeur of their splendid layout and their sublime mysticism which exalts them to temples of reflection.

Along the vast plains, the majestic white marble in an impressive layout according to fixed lines, proclaims the glory and heroism of the American soldiers who fought in the past for the freedom of Europe and paid for it with their lives! They gave everything they had, including their lives! The overall air of these acres of God, with their harmonious layout, their perspective effects, and their undulating green, naturally makes a fascinating impression on the unattached cemetery visitors.

26,694 young American soldiers found their last earthly resting place in the cemeteries of Margraten, Henri-Chapelle, Neuville-en-Condroz, and Hamm. A further 3,006 fell in battle but have neither grave, cross, nor Star of David. Their remains lie desolate in foreign soil, far from their homeland. No human hand has been able to protect their secret grave from sorrowful loneliness. No flower has ever adorned their last resting place. No priest has ever walked round, blessing the graves. No one has ever spent time at the grave in quiet remembrance. There is no one who stood there in silent conversation. They have passed

away without leaving a trace of their presence behind.

The blood of all these brave GIs was shed to free our homelands. It is part of our duty to keep the memory alive of these Americans who died and this remembrance may never cease. It is the duty of the living to remember the dead. Whether from the Netherlands, Belgium, or Luxembourg, we all have the Americans to thank for our national identity, our independence, our freedom and our well-being. These sons of America, who fought for months or years here in Europe against an unrelenting enemy, have a right to our permanent appreciation and our eternal gratitude. The endless fields of graves emit an admonition for reflection:

**NO MORE WAR!**

**NO MORE WAR GRAVES!**

*The above is the forward written by Camille P. Kohn, the President of CEB&A (Cercle d'Etudes sur Bata des Ardennes a.s.b.l., Grande-Duché of Luxembourg) to a new book called "IN THE SHADOW OF THE FORESTS." This book, written by Armand Blau, will be published in Europe in September 1996, in four languages and will contain the names of the GIs buried at the cemeteries of the Benelux countries mentioned, including the missing. As you may or may not know each of these graves of our fallen comrades have been adopted by individual people of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. Throughout the year they visit each grave, place flowers on it and pay the respects of grateful nations for the ultimate sacrifice that our boys and girls made to restore freedom to their countries and to preserve freedom in our country. This is done out of respect and gratitude that these heroes shall not have died in vain!*

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## GOLDEN GATE CHAPTER BATTLE OF THE BULGE MONUMENT

The Golden Gate chapter held formal dedication ceremonies on August 14, 1996, for a monument to the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. The 8 and 1/2 ton boulder has affixed a bronze plaque bearing the VBOB seal with the following words:

"Dedicated to the gallant and victorious men and women who participated in the Battle of the Bulge, 16 December 1944 through 26 January 1945 in Belgium and Luxembourg. This major conflict has been called the greatest battle ever fought by the United States Army. Victory was achieved at the cost of 80,987 American dead or wounded. Presented by the Golden Gate Chapter, Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, on this 14th day of August, 1996."

The monument is located at Fort Milley VA Medical Center, 4150 Clement Street (at 42nd Avenue). **JOB WELL DONE.**



**VBOB Plaque Dedication/Memorial Service,  
Hyannis, Mass., September 10, 1996**

Photo by Eugene T. Refice



## OUR TRADITION LIVES ON

by Murray Shapiro

Little do we know the far-reaching impact our efforts sometimes make. Not so long ago we were asked by American Legion National Headquarters and Premium Press to submit a "voice" from World War II. I dutifully sent in a small vignette of the very beginnings of the "Battle of the Bulge" as I witnessed it along with a picture taken in Paris a few months after. The Legion published the article and picture in our book of remembrances, *Voices: Letters from World War II*, by Ken Scharnberg. Having an abiding interest in that war, I read the entire work, then put it on my book shelf and forgot about it.

This month, I received a letter from John Ulferts. I shall excerpt a portion of that letter since its contents will be most encouraging to all of us who fought or served our country in the military and are concerned that our sacrifices might not be remembered:

"I am writing to you today to send you my heart felt thanks. I'm not a writer, not a researcher. I'm just a middle school teacher who happens to be might proud of his country and its veterans. You see, I've just finished reading the American Legion's book, *Voices: Letters from World War II*. I was deeply moved by the accounts of the veterans of that epic battle who risked their lives to preserve American freedom. After reading the book, I've gotten the wild idea of writing to some of the veterans in it and asking them, if they are not too painful to share additional memories with my students. You see, I don't want the sacrifices you made at the German Seigfried Line, and that of millions of others to be forgotten.

...after graduating from college, I moved west to Colorado, met my wife, got married and started raising a family. Then, last year, Uncle Sam called with a job offer I couldn't refuse. I packed my young family up...and moved to Bad Kreuznach, Germany, to serve as a civilian teacher with the U.S. Department of Defense Dependent Schools. I was proud and honored to answer the call to teach the children of America's brave fighting force.

Arriving here in Europe, the sacrifices you, and the men of your generation made in defeating the great evil that the Axis powers represented became real to me. My family and I have visited some of the sites still haunted by the memories of World War II. We went to Luxembourg and Belgium and to the Ardennes Forest, where the pivotal Battle of the Bulge was fought. There, in Bastogne, the gratitude of a thankful people is expressed in a star-shaped memorial to the American men who fought it, and is seen on every street corner as the Belgium people still proudly wave the Stars and Stripes from their homes. In Diekirch, Luxembourg, we visited a historical museum commemorating that battle and the night the town was liberated by Americans. The curator there had tears in his eyes as he told my wife and I that he had been forced into the Nazi army and fought as a slave soldier in Italy.

At Remagen, on the Rhine, near where we live, we saw what remains of the Ludendorf Bridge and the peace museum erected there just a few years ago. I marveled in silence at the courage it must have taken to cross that weakened bridge, itself near collapse, the raging Rhine below, all the while being shot at.

The full measure of what was at stake in that awful war was spelled out to me at Dachau and at Auschwitz concentration

camp. We visited Auschwitz and Dachau to pay our respects to the innocent, to somehow let them know that their lives weren't wasted, that [there are] those who care, those who will do everything in their power to stop such a slaughter from happening again. Because of our two young children, Chris and I went to Auschwitz separately not wanting to expose them at their tender ages to such honor.

There, within those walls, 50 years are erased as if they were only yesterday. The Nazis didn't have time to hide their barbarism, and, thankfully, history has not forgotten it. The terrible sights are forever etched in my memory, a nightmare never to be forgotten--a huge barracks full of eyeglasses, another of empty suitcases (their owners had come to a place from which they would never return) and another of artificial limbs. The Nazis even stole these from their victims. It was too much for Chris and me. We were both moved to tears before leaving. She later told me she cried so hysterically she nearly collapsed.

I write to you today because my generation must never forget the sacrifice your generation paid for our survival. I wouldn't want to live in this world today if the U.S. had not won that horrible war. You, and the men like you, made this world free, safe and decent for people like me to raise our children. Nicholas and Ashley, my darling little ones, have never met you. But they owe their lives to you just as surely as I owe mine.

Today, as an educator, I can think of no better way to reach the students I teach than to share with them the memories of the men who were there, who fought the battles that won us our freedom. I plan to use this fine book published by the American Legion in class. I'd also like to share with my students any additional recollections, if they are not too painful, you may have of your World War II experience.

...Last year students in our social studies class heard from a veteran we had on the staff who had participated in the Battle of the Bulge. They were moved by his accounts of what happened there.. I knew it was difficult and painful for him to tell about his experience in the war. But he left an indelible impression on those student who had before looked at the war as only ancient history. After he spoke, they all valued their freedom just a little more.... In any case, whether you choose to respond or not, please know that your contribution will never be forgotten wherever freedom is prized. Today in German, as in Japan, there is no better testament to the greatness of American victory than the fact that freedom and democracy are espoused throughout these countries. Today, wherever we go in Germany, we see American flags and realize that the Germans love the values America stands for. World War II veterans preserved those values and made it possible for them to be enshrined even here.

God bless!  
John Ulferts Family

*[Note from Murray: After reading John's letter to me, I more than honored his request, sending him all 300-plus pages of my war memoir and several copies of the photos taken at the time.]*

*[Another note: VBOB has mailed John a copy of the Memorable Bulge Incidents compilation and some other materials which may be informative to him and his students.]*

# 87<sup>TH</sup> DIVISION RECALLS ITS DEEDS AS THOUSANDS OF BELGIANS CHEER

By Mitchell Kaidy  
Chairman, Monuments Committee

Amid more than 1,000 cheering Belgians, the 87th Infantry Division dedicated four plaques in the Ardennes Forest which in the bitter winter of 1944-45 was the scene of the some of the heaviest and most critical battles of World War II.

A total of 52 veterans and their families made the journey to Pironpre, Tillet, Moiricy, and St. Hubert, towns captured by the division. The veterans were saluted by a letter from President Clinton and special certificates from Belgian Minister of Defense J.P. Poncelet. Although eligible for the Belgian fouragerre, the 87th Division was deactivated in 1945, before the award was granted.

On its tour in June, the division also renamed a street in Wasserbillig, Luxembourg, for its commanding general, Maj. Gen. Frank L. Culin, and erected a plaque at its 1945 Rhine River crossing site at Boppard. It later toured other German battle sites.

Not merely a sightseeing tour, as Chairman Mitchell Kaidy, reminded the veterans, "we have at last been able to write our own history as we lived it. We know what we accomplished; now the world knows; everybody who wants to know the truth can read it on our plaques for at least the next century."

High-ranking officers of the Belgian Reserve Association, Corlux, including Col. Marcel Etienne, Maj. Frant LeRoy, Maj. Roger Colle, Major Roger Thumilaire and Lt. Gilbert Stevenot helped arrange and participated in the June 8th ceremonies.

Stevenot, a First Army translator during the war, served as an invaluable translator for Chairman Kaidy during two Belgian trips in March and June. Thumilaire deserves warm thanks for his commitment and unstinting services. Kaidy conceived the plaque ceremonies when he met Thumilaire in Libramont in 1994.

Mayors of the towns of St. Ode (Tillet), Libramont (Moiricy and Pironpre), and St. Hubert helped unveil the plaques and spoke during the ceremonies. 87th Division speakers were Monuments Committee Chairman Kaidy, at Pironpre (The Bloody Crossroads); Maj. Bob Watson, Tillet; Ross Rasmussen, St. Hubert, and Earle Hart, Moiricy.



by Frank Wooldridge, (90th Div.), Boylston, MA

The surging seas, pushed by Hurricane Eduardo, canceled the annual Hyannis Yacht Club sail race this past Labor Day as the summer's end vacation crowd exited along a 20 mile stretch of mid-Cape highway of backed-up vehicles, fleeing the Cape before the Sagamore Bridge.

Fortunately, Eduardo veered off to the east of Chatham at the Cape's elbow leaving little damage. As the boarded-up windows came down, the quaint town of Hyannis experienced another whirlwind when 410 Battle of the Bulge Veterans and their wives stormed into the area to attend their 15th Annual Reunion, September 8-12.

The TARA family Cape Codder Hotel, where President Stan Wojtusik and his reunion committee had met throughout the past 12 months of planning, was host for the four day affair where the guests gathered from all parts of the country. Some fleeing on the heels Hurricane Fran, as it swept across the flooded areas of the Carolinas and Virginia, as did Joe & Mae Barvir (87th Div), and Dorothy Davis (57th FH), as did others.

After registering with Nancy Monson and her daughter Linda, who did a yeoman's job, many renewed acquaintances in the crowded lobby while others, and new-timers, (which set a record), found the hospitality room.

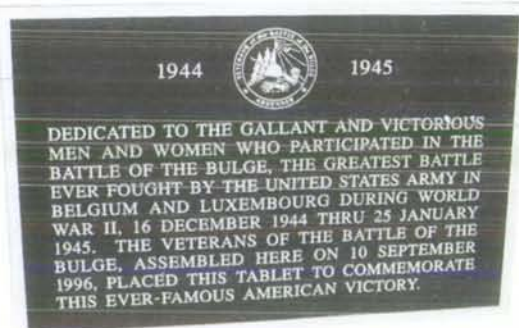
The spacious room, beautifully decorated by Edith Nowels and Anita Keyser, sisters of Horace "Bud" Thorne, (9th ARM-DD), and posthumous CMD awardee, provided a focal point for reminiscing and story swapping. Tom Jones, Chair-man, and his bartenders Lou Cunningham (106th Div) and George Watson (87th Div.) kept the refreshments flowing throughout the four-day event. Mike Petrick's colorful "welcome signs," and John McAuliffe's (both 87th Div.) battle scene posters gave the room a military posture to the delight of the merry guests at the wine and cheese reception.

Most of the first-time visitors to the Cape took advantage of the Whale Watch trip in the bay. About 20 sightings were observed. Also the "Plimoth" Plantation tour of Plymouth Rock, the Mayflower, and luncheon provided much picture shooting for the history buffs among us.

Threatening clouds moved the Monday evening New England Clambake indoors, but did not take the edge off the guests appetite for the delicious chowder, steamers, and boiled lobsters. Lobster bibs and buttered fingers were the dress order for the high-spirited evening.

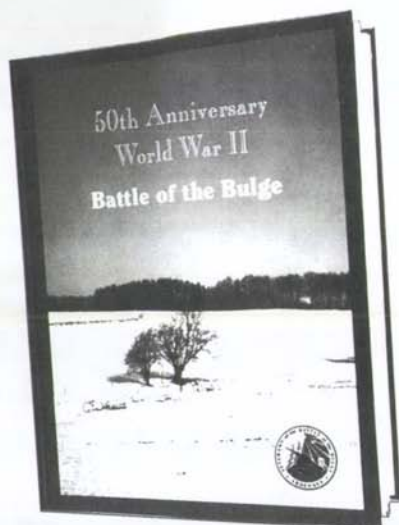
An early morning fog, typical around the bay, canceled the Hyannis Harbor Port boat tour, but did not deter shopping at the spacious Cape Cod Mall, enjoyed by all.

The highlight of the reunion was the Plaque Dedication Memorial Service on the town green at the east end of Hyannis. The beautiful stone donated by the De Christopher Brothers monument works of Philadelphia, surrounded by neat shrubs and bright flowers, was unveiled by Jean Gavin, widow of Gen. James Gavin, who commanded the 82nd Airborne Division during the battle.



Inscription on Battle of the Bulge Monument dedicated September 10, 1996, Hyannis, Mass. photo by Eugene T. Refice

# The National Commemoration of The 50th ANNIVERSARY of WW II Battle of The Bulge



Published by:  
The Veterans of The  
Battle of The Bulge  
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**SOUVENIR PROGRAM BOOK** prepared as a "Remembrance" of the 50th Anniversary Events which occurred in St. Louis, in 1994, this publication will serve as a treasured possession for those who are interested in the enduring Battle of the Bulge legacy.

In response to the many letters received requesting copies, additional copies are on hand for all who would like to have this "once in a lifetime" publication. The 8-1/2" x 11-1/2" book contains 152 pages, with a full color, hard binding.

There is a limited number available at \$20.00 per copy (including shipping/handling). Make check payable to VBOB and mail to: VBOB, PO Box 11129, Arlington, Virginia 22210-2129.



Please send \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the 50th Anniversary Souvenir Program Book at \$20.00 per copy (including shipping and handling).

\_\_\_\_\_  
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(Street Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(State) (Zip Code)

## HELP TO BRING HIM HOME

The following letter was received for help in determining the whereabouts of the remains of **MICHAEL D. PALAIA, 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 423 INFANTRY, COMPANY I:**

At a recent reunion of the 106th Division, I was informed your magazine might be able to help us locate the remains of my brother, Michael. I am trying to expedite the dying wish of my mother that we bring Michael home to rest. We have found the area where his body was placed, and it still goes undisturbed all these years in Dresden, Germany.

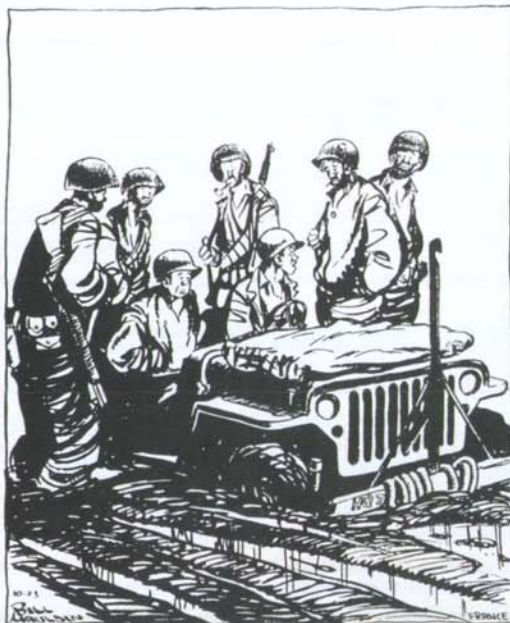
For 50 years we never knew what happened to Michael until someone who was writing a book, told us exactly what happened. My brother was a POW in Dresden, and was the character, Edgar Derby in Kert Vonnegut's book, *Slaughterhouse Five*, who was executed by the SS. If this person had not sought this information on Michael's background, we would never have known the truth of Michael.

I can only hope to find my brother with the aid of people like your members, who go out of their way to do the impossible in helping others. For my family, who also offer you their thanks and support in this search, I offer my personal gratitude for the kindness of your help.

ANY information you have may help them in putting this puzzle together and Ralph and his family will be very grateful.

Ralph Palaia (Telephone: 215-332-6028)  
3841 Pearson Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19114

Up Front  
Bill Mauldin



ARE YOUR DUES DUE?

"...I'll never splash mud on a dogface again (999)...I'll never splash mud on a dogface again (1000)...  
Now will ya help us push?"

## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

Associate Member J. Claude Little would like to hear from members of **SIXTH ARMORED DIVISION, 25TH ARMORED ENGINEER BATTALION, COMPANY A**, and members of **THIRD ARMORED DIVISION, 23RD ARMORED ENGINEER BATTALION, COMPANY E**, who may have knowledge of **RILEY D. TYREE** in Belgium around the vicinity of Marche-en-Famenne (Waha-Harsin). Write to J. Claude at: Kleine Ommegangweg 28; B-9420 Erpe; Belgium.

Associate Member Harlan Glenn Groom would like to hear from anyone planning a trip back to Belgium during December. He would also like to hear from **82ND and 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISIONS**. Write to Harlan at: 5617 Denny Avenue, North Hollywood, California 91601.

**JAMES LENDRUM** wrote for a membership application and wants to know just what the thermometer read in the Ardennes. Write to him at: 25560 10 Mile Road, Southfield, Michigan 48034.

**EDWIN A. CALFEE, 50TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION (6TH ARMORED DIVISION)** would like to hear from anyone who can tell him which unit they were attached to on January 1, 1945 going into Bastogne. He thinks it might have been the **68TH, 15TH OR 69TH TANK BATTALION**. In any event, it was the worst New Year's Day Edwin ever had. Write to Edwin at: 141 Shenley Avenue, Bluefield, Virginia 24605-1418.

New associate member **JOSIANE (JOSIE) PELTZER** from Berdorf, Luxembourg, writes to let you know that her family will never forget what you did for the people of her hometown.

Andrew N. Brodnick, whose father, **LEONARD BRODNICK**, served in the **639TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS BATTALION, BATTERY B**, would like any information on the action of this unit. If you can help write to him at: 123 Main Street, Suite 1700, White Plains, New York 10601.

Mary Seay writes to see if you can provide information about **WILLIAM FRANKLIN MONK, 266TH ENGINEER BATTALION, COMPANY B**. (He was also in Company C, 27th BNERTC at Fort Leonardwood, Missouri.) Write to Mary at: 19202 Ramsey Road, Crosby, Texas 77532-6094.

**EDWARD LINDER, 32ND ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY GROUP, HEADQUARTERS**, writes to let us know that he enjoys seeing the Bill Mauldin cartoons we occasionally use. He like to obtain a copy of Mauldin's book *Up Front*. If you know where he can find one, write to him at: 1225 Myerlee Country Club, Blvd., Fort Myers, Florida 33919. *[Please also let the office know, it would be an important addition to our archives.]*

Betty (Arnold) Wright would like to obtain information regarding her husband **DENZELLE H. ARNOLD, 99TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 393RD INFANTRY,**

**HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS COMPANY**. He was nicknamed "Dead Eye." Write to Betty at: 413 Pendleton Street, Falmouth, Kentucky 41040.

Ned Connors would like to receive tape recordings of your WW II experience. The tape will be returned to you and a record will be preserved in Washington, DC. Ned's address is: 29 Allen Avenue, Barrington, Rhode Island 02806.

**WILLIAM A. BUTLER, 246TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, COMPANY A**, would like to hear from anyone who served in his outfit. His address: 380 County Road 781, Cullman, Alabama 35055.

**CLIFFORD WOODWARD, 99TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 393RD INFANTRY**, would like to hear from someone from his unit, particularly **CAPTAIN COKE, LT. SELVIG, AND SGT. SEYMORE**. He would also like to hear from **JAMES LANGFORD, B. C. HENDERSON, and JERRY HRBEK, 394TH REGIMENT**. Write to Clifford at: 725 Selby Street, Findlay, OH 45840.

**LOUIS H. PELLIS, 99TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 394TH INFANTRY, COMPANY G**, wrote to tell us he found out about VBOB as a result of press coverage for the recent Hyannis reunion. He attended the banquet and found his former assistant squad leader **HAROLD SCHAEFER** and platoon leader **JAMES BURTNER**. If you, too, were in Louis's outfit write to him at: 43 Black Ball Hill Road, Dennis, Massachusetts 02628.

**KENNETH CHRISTIANSON, 4TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE**, would like to hear from anyone who served with the **4 and 24TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE** outfits in the ETO. Write to Ken at: Box 189, Washburn, North Dakota 58577-0189.

**MICHAEL DEL VECCHIO, 998TH TREADWAY BRIDGE COMPANY**, would like to hear from some of you. Write to him at: 40 Manilla Avenue, Milford, Connecticut 06460.

Ann Pearson is trying to locate **DONALD PAUL DAPORE**, who was stationed at Fort Forrest, Tennessee during WWII (1943). He was with **318TH INFANTRY, SERVICE COMPANY**. If you can help, write to Ann at: 1051 Mitchell Road, Nashville, Tennessee 37206-1149.

Martha Hance would like to know if anyone remembers her husband, **ALEXANDER HANCE, 99TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 535TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY WEAPONS BATTALION (MOBILE)**. Drop her a note at: PO Box 95, Hume, Illinois 61932.

**KENNETH E. LONG, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION, 18TH INFANTRY, COMPANY G**, would like to hear from someone in his outfit. His address is: 1904 Diana Drive, Mendota, Illinois 61342.

*(Continued on Page 13)*

★★★

Wars are different from baseball games where, at the end of the game, the teams get dressed and leave the park.

HARRY TRUMAN

## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

(Continued from Page 12)

Rose Sevigny writes that her father would like to get in touch with anyone from the **9TH ARMORED DIVISION**. His name is **CARMEN F. CARRANO** and is address is: 125 Putnam Avenue #708, Hamden, Connecticut 06517.

Mike McFalls writes to see if anyone remembers his dad: **HOBART N. McFALLS, JR., 117 INFANTRY COMPANY L**. If so, please write to Mike: 22 Covington Street, Asheville, North Carolina 28806-2602.

Jim Pomfret's uncle, **JAMES DOYLE**, served with the **1ST INFANTRY DIVISION, 18TH INFANTRY**. Jim would like to learn more about this unit and also where they were located during the Bulge. Write to Jim at: 1116 South Curley Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21224.

**LLOYD M. JONES (NOW L. MARTIN JONES), 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 423RD INFANTRY, COMPANY G**, would like to learn the whereabouts of **JOHN PARCHINSKY** (from his platoon) and **MORRIS A. PATRIZI, COMPANY C**. He would like to hear from anyone from his outfit. Write to: 1329 Kasold Drive, M-1, Lawrence, Kansas 66049-3426.

Do you remember **DONALD JUNIOR SMITH, 320TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY I**? His brother Thomas E. Smith would like to hear from you if you do. Write to Thomas as: 1366 Richland Road, Marion, Ohio 43302-8478.

**ALBERT A. MARINUCCI, 30TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 230TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY C**, would like to hear from anyone who served with him. He would also like to see if someone knows the whereabouts of **LOUISE(?) R. SBERNA (or SBERMA)** and **SHERMAN GOLDSTEIN**. Al can be reached at: 1200 Little John Drive, Columbus, Ohio 43227.

**WILLIAM STEWART, 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 81ST ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, COMPANY A**, writes to ask if anyone knows of a Purple Heart being awarded for frost bite. The office is trying to secure this information for him. However, if any of you know of someone let the office know with a copy to William. William's address is: 2304 Chemin Road, Petersburg, Virginia 23805. *[The office has learned that the Purple Heart was not awarded for frost bite or cold injuries.]*

Nechia Huss writes to see if anyone remembers her step father--**CHARLES E. MOORE (PETE), 453RD MILITARY POLICE ESCORT GUARD COMPANY**. The company is listed as having served in the Northern France Campaign but Nechia sent along materials suggesting he may also have been in the Bulge area. If you have any information, write to her at: 106 Oaklawn, Conway, Arkansas 72032.

Lavern Daves writes to see if anyone remembers her brother, **LLOYD F. DAVES, 83RD INFANTRY DIVISION**. He is buried in the Henri-Chappelle Cemetery and she recently traveled there. She also visited the Luxemburg and Coleville Cemeteries and will be happy to share any information she has with anyone

who who writes. She would also like to hear from anyone who may have known her brother or who may be from his unit. Write to Lavern at: P.O. Box 66, Silva, Missouri 63964.

May (Hill) Hartley writes to see if someone recognizes her only brother's name and may have served with him. His name is **MARION G. (BUD) HILL, JR.**, who served with the **101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION, 506TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY B**. (She isn't sure about the Company.) He was killed in Bastogne on December 23, 1944, and is buried in Hamm, Luxembourg. Let May hear from you: 931 North Henry Street, Coquille, Oregon 97423-1547.

**RALPH STORM, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION, 21ST ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, COMPANY B**, is doing research on life and work of artillerymen in the Bulge. He would like your help in filling out a questionnaire if you were in the artillery. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: 2840 Starr Avenue, Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54703.

**ROBERT L. THOMPSON, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION, 23RD INFANTRY, COMPANY A**, send us a notice about their reunion on September 14-15. It was received too late for the last issue, but if you want information, write to him at: 658 Highland Drive, Walnutport, Pennsylvania 18088.

Alison Lieberman-Wilk is searching for anyone who may have known her father, **JACK LIEBERMAN, 103RD INFANTRY DIVISION, 410 INFANTRY REGIMENT, 4TH BATTALION, COMPANY D**. Write to Alison at: 119 Alburger Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19115-4027.

**STEW MC DONNELL, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 112TH INFANTRY, 2ND BATTALION, COMPANY G, WEAPONS PLATOON**, is looking for members of his outfit, especially **JOE PANNUCI, EUGENE MAZUR** and **SERGEANT TATE**. Write to Stew at: 315 South Woodland, Michigan City, Indiana 46360.

New member **LOUIS W. MOREA, 26TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 328TH INFANTRY, 1ST BATTALION, D COMPANY**, wants to know if there's anyone out there who served with him. Write to Lou at: 28 Hawthorne Road, Yarmouthport, Massachusetts 02675.

Associate member Danny S. Parker, who has written several books on the Bulge, would like some help in locating an association for: 2nd Engineer Combat Battalion; 44th and 77th Evacuation Hospitals; 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate); or the 440th AAA AW Battalion? If you know, advise Danny at: 139 West Leon Lane, Cocoa Beach, Florida 32931.

Shirley (Walkerow) Wagner writes that her brother, **MONFORD (MONTY) WADE WALKEROW** served with the **101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION**. She would appreciate hearing from anyone who may have served with him. Write to her at: 2527 Mechanicsburg Road, Wooster, Ohio 44691.

**ALDO FURETTI** would like to hear from those who live on Staten Island. Address: 436 Manor Road, Staten Island, New York 10314.

(Continued on Page 14)

## SPECIAL EDITION PLANNED

Some time in the future, we plan to have a special edition. It will deal with the history of each unit involved in the Battle of the Bulge--or at least those who submit same.

This is not to be a complete history of your unit, it is to deal with your involvement in the Battle of the Bulge only.

We mention it at this time in order that you can begin to make preparations for the submittal for your unit. There will only be one for each unit--so contact your unit historian so that he can begin preparation.

There is one problem: space. With over 400 different groups in the Bulge, space will be a consideration. At the present time we anticipate one page for each group (leaving room for a copy of the insignia about 1-1/2" x 2"). Many of the smaller units will need to be thinking about getting a black and white (reproducible copy of their insignia) to have ready when the time comes.

If submitted, there will be a history for each division, each regiment, each battalion, each company, etc. When requested, they will be printed in the order in which they are received. If we receive good cooperation, it may be that we will have to have more than one "special" edition. We hope so.

All submittals will become the property of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc.

**Do not send until requested to do so, but you need to start thinking about it so you will be ready.**

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## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

*(Continued from Page 13)*

Anyone who served with 1st Lt. CHARLES VON STADT, 93RD CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON, TROOP D, 13TH ARMORED DIVISION, please write to Tom Jones, 1837 East Venango Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19134.

Betty Scholey would like to hear from anyone who might remember her brother, DELBERT JOSEPH CHARLES, 1ST ARMY, FIELD ARTILLERY. Betty's address is: 2601 Christoval Road, San Angelo, Texas 76903-8611.

Robert Boyer would like to hear from anyone who remembers any particulars about broadcasts by Axis Sally, or the reactions of the GI's to her broadcasts. Robert is writing a book-length biography of Sally (Mildred Elizabeth Gillars) and would appreciate any help you can give. Write to Robert at: 5585 Greenwich Street, Worthington, Ohio 43085.

Frances L. Snyder's brother, LT. BOYCE O. ENGLAND, 5TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 10TH INFANTRY (3RD U.S. ARMY), was killed in the Battle of the Bulge on December 24th. She would like to hear from anyone who remembers him. Her address is: 5404 Columbus Road, Quincy, Illinois 62301-8648.

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I have always been against the pacifists during the war, and against the jingoists at the end.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

## How Intelligent Is Intelligence?

*[The following article appeared in the July/August, 1996 issue of "Thunder From Heaven," the newsletter of the 17th Airborne Division Association. The article was written by Ed Morgenstern, 193D.]*

**The use of censorship by the military has been questioned on a number of occasions. Here is an example of the futile use of censorship during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. I hope the incident will make the intelligence community think at least twice before imposing censorship.**

On January 7, 1945, I was wounded in the fighting around Bastogne, Belgium, and was taken to a U.S. Army hospital (MASH unit) in the area. A week later, after recuperating from surgery, I asked for some V-mail stationery to notify my parents that my chest and abdominal wounds, although serious, would heal in time. I was aware that the then War Department would send them a scary telegram stating that I was "seriously wounded in action."

However, a medical officer warned me and the other patients in our ward that our letters were to be censored and we could not write that we were wounded or in the hospital. The reason we were told was to keep the Germans from knowing our casualties should the mail fall into enemy hands. I really could not see what harm could result from such information, but as a lowly PFC, I carried little weight. By the middle of January the German advance had been stopped. Of course, I had to follow orders and could only write about harmless thoughts and incidents. I wrote that I was seeing new faces and new places. I did underline the date and requested that the letter be held for future reference.

Subsequent correspondence advised me that my parents had received my V-mail letter before they received the telegram and they were happy that I could write. My cousin who was shown the letter knew I was in the hospital. He noticed that the letter was censored and initialed by a "Capt J. J. Jones, M.C." (not his real name). And since the Marine Corps was not in proximity to Bastogne, the M.C. must stand for Medical Corps.

Had all the mail from hospitals and the list of casualties been available to the German General staff at that time, it would have been useless. The German army was being pushed back and was in no position to take advantage of the situation, even knowing how high were our casualties. German casualties were even higher.

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## HELP US SAVE MONEY

Check your mailing label. Directly above your last name is the date on which your dues were due. If your dues are due (or past due), please submit promptly. It's very expensive to send dues reminders. Paying your dues promptly really helps our finances a lot.

## Fifty Years Ago

# It Was Newman's Call at The Battle of the Bulge

*[The following article by Sean M. Walsh appeared in the January 5, 1995, issue of the CAPE COD NEWS, Hyannis, Massachusetts.]*

Some 77,000 Allied casualties fell from December 16, 1944 through January 16, 1945 in the northeast of France and Belgium in the Ardennes mountains.

On December 30, 1944, exactly 50 years ago last Friday, Hyannisport resident Larry Newman stood knee deep in the mud, blood and freezing snow of Bastogne, Belgium.

It was his first day in the by then 2-week old battle for the Belgian Ardennes sector and the battle was in full swing.

Panzers rained a blitzkrieg of shells upon the Allies Forces and the U.S. Army's Sherman tanks. Foxholes served as impromptu graves for thousands. All around Mr. Newman, in woods dark as they were deep, were the cries of pain and fear.

While he was dressed in full combat gear, Larry Newman carried no M-1 Garand rifle, but a pencil and notepad: he was a United Press International and International News Service correspondent.

On that day 50 years ago, at the age of 30, he coined the name for the fight he witnessed, a name that has been etched forever in history books.

He called it, The Battle of the Bulge.

Mr. Newman had been no stranger to the ravages of war. He had followed General George S. Patton Jr. from the battlefields of North Africa to Sicily, and the two had become close friends.

Mr. Newman's sizable, but warm, seaside home in Hyannisport is a testimony to that friendship. Old framed photos adorn his library walls, a young reporter side by side with the famous general, sketches of World War II battles, framed medals from the war.

Yes, even though Mr. Newman did not raise his sights to German eyes while he toured Europe and Africa from 1943 through 1945, he nevertheless served his country and survived World War II in a way many have not. He witnessed and documented and etched upon his blood-sullied notepad world history. He was also shot in the process.

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## "It was the dead and the dying,... And it was cold as hell."

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On the day he coined the name Battle of the Bulge, Mr. Newman indeed spoke with friend General Patton. The particulars are now, a little foggy, but the gist of the discussion is clear.

"It was war to him. He was calm, cool, collected," Mr. Newman said. "His father and grandfather were generals before

him. West Pointers."

But all around the general and Mr. Newman was a pandemonium of bloodshed and agony.

"It was the dead and the dying," Mr. Newman recalled. "and it was cold as hell. I named it the Battle of the Bulge."

According to history books, the Germans had penetrated deep into Belgium, creating a dent or "Bulge," in the Allied lines, threatening to break through to the North Belgian plain and seize Antwerp.

Even though grossly outnumbered, the U.S. 1st, 9th and 3rd armies attacked the Germans. It was an effort Mr. Newman will never forget.

"The Germans were trying to go all the way through Belgium, the Netherlands, but they didn't quite make it, it was their last gasp," Mr. Newman said. "It was the end of the ball game for them."

The German army, Mr. Newman added, was far better equipped than the Allied foot soldier--better tanks, better guns, more disciplined infantry men. But the allies had more guts and many more guns than their enemies, Mr. Newman stressed.

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## "We didn't know what the hell was going on."

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"The Germans had the best of everything in the world, but the weight of arms the United States poured into Europe was so great you can't imagine," he said.

But more bullets and more guns and more guts did not make the task of beating the Germans any less difficult.

"We didn't know what the hell was going on. The Battle of the Bulge was a surprise to us because we kicked the hell out 'em every place else. A lot of soldiers were scared. They didn't understand what was going on," he said.

And since that freezing December day he stepped onto the battlefield and wrote the words "The Battle of the Bulge," he has not forgotten what it was like to witness the horror of war.

Even while standing in the White House or the Pentagon accepting a medal for meritorious service, or hobnobbing with the Kennedys down the street or in the days he helped reorganize the Cape Cod Baseball League, Mr. Newman cannot, and will not, forget.

As he sat last Friday morning in his living room armchair in Hyannisport, the wind whipping across the nearby sea, this 80-year-old veteran of war and the world around him, simply picked a day from memory and recalled history in the making. He should know. He was there.

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## SPECIAL THANKS TO CAPE COD TIMES

VBOB would like to thank the *Cape Cod Times* for its splendid press coverage during our recent reunion. Staff writer John Leaning went all out to cover our activities. We were first page news.

**MEMORABLE****BULGE  
INCIDENTS**

UNEDITED AND HERETOFORE UNPUBLISHED

Accounts of events and experiences in the Battle of the Bulge as recalled and expressed by veterans of the greatest battle ever fought by the U.S. Army in the greatest war ever fought are of much historical significance. These "close-up" combatant accounts are a complement to the study of strategy and logistics and are a legacy of an important battle and victory in the U.S. military annals.

These are priceless first-person recollections by living legends in what General Dwight D. Eisenhower foresaw as our greatest victory and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, in speaking before the House of Commons, characterized as an ever-famous American victory.

**A BUSY FOX HOLE**

December, 1944

**Pete Hulewicz**  
17th Airborne Division  
194th Glider Infantry  
Company A  
Scottsdale, Arizona

On the Sunday before the Battle of the Bulge, I was in a pub in London trying to drink up all the gin in England. Sgt. H came to me and asked to borrow some money. I gave him \$20.00. A few hours later the MP's came into the pub and announced they were rounding up all the GI's and returning us to camp. As there was no trouble in the pub, we all sensed this was serious.

We were returned to Ogbourne St. George in England and were told that we received movement orders from the division. On December 20, 1944, I was in the advance party that left for the marshalling area at Ramsbury Field, England. The next day we flew to Mourmelon, France, in C47's and then trucked into Magerofte, Belgium, in 2-1/2 ton trucks. In our very first action with the Germans a sniper got Sgt. H through the forehead so I knew I would never get my 20 bucks back.

Our platoon was bivouacked in a dense forest of very tall trees in the vicinity of Houmont, Belgium. Soon the German 88's were shelling us, and flying tree splinters were everywhere, and I was sure nothing could live in these woods. Charlie S and I dug a deep fox hole so that we could sit in it back to back. When the shelling let up we got out to relieve ourselves and saw that many of these 80 foot tall trees were leveled down to just stumps.

There were cows and horses standing but they were full of shrapnel and blood was spouting from their wounds. Some animals were lying dead, some maimed, and mangled and some were tethered to clumps of trees.

Soon the artillery barrage resumed, and as the forest was cut down and the Germans observed movement, the mortar and sniper fire became very heavy. As we sat in our two man fox hole a rabbit would occasionally land in our fox hole and we would sadly throw him out. Then the artillery fire spooked a stud horse who fell on top of us into our fox hole. His hind legs were resting in the bottom of our fox hole straddling Charlie and me, and his forelegs rested on top of the fox hole.

The horse was bleeding profusely from wounds all over his

body and in his bewildered condition was trying to kick his way out of our fox hole. All this kicking bruised Charlie and me and after a while the horse stopped kicking and settled down to urinate on Charlie's head and defecate on my head. By now we had enough of this horse and we were afraid he would die in the hole and trap us. For this reason we each lifted a hind leg and boosted him out of the hole and set him free. By the time it was over not a tree was standing, all the animals were dead and we were ordered to move and attack the enemy.

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**A HOSTILE TIGER IN A HOSPITAL**

December, 1944

**Dick Radock**  
80th Infantry Division  
305th Medical Battalion  
Company C  
Bell Vernon, Pennsylvania

By December 13, 1944, Heiderscheid was clear of enemy troops so I had to set up an ambulance shuttle post since my Company C, 305th Medical Battalion of the 80th Infantry Division of the XII Corps of the 3rd Army was located in Ettelbruck and too far away to transport wounded over treacherous icy roads. The 319th Infantry Regiment Combat Team was in the next town on a ridge. The ambulances with each battalion aid station would bring casualties to me and I would transfer them to other ambulances for the long trip to my collecting company.

I had a radio and kept in touch with the 1st and 3rd battalion aid stations. The village is small and located on a steep ridge.

While we were in this town we were getting shelled by a panzer every so often. One of our artillery observers, a staff sergeant was staying in our billet (a 2-1/2 story house). He removed a terra cotta tile from the roof in the attic and put his periscope through the hole to observe any German targets, then he would call his unit and give them coordinates then they would lob a few shells on specific targets. He kept watching while I was talking to him.

Finally he saw a tiger tank with an 88mm cannon sticking out of a hole in the wall of a hospital with a large Red Cross on the



roof. He observed the tiger panzer fire three shells then pull back under cover so he could not be seen from the air. The S/Sgt told me to look through the periscope and I saw the panzer move forward and fire a few shells and after a few seconds we could hear the shells whistling over our heads. The tank was on the other ridge and our infantry was ahead and down in a ravine trying to outflank the enemy.

The S/Sgt radioed his unit and gave them the coordinates; they in turn gave the information to our XIX-TAC Air Force. They in turn sent four P-47's to bomb the panzer. It didn't take long for the planes to fly over the hospital and drop a few bombs on top of the building and hit it dead center and knocked out the tiger.

The hospital was empty, no patients were in there. We figured if the enemy could use the hospital to hide a tiger in the building then we had a right to bomb it since it was a hostile building. Now it is quite in Heidersheid and we can get on with our mission.

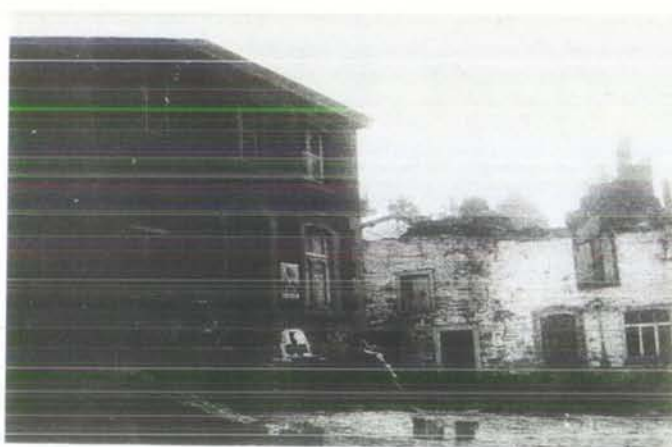
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### ANOTHER MISSED MEAL

December 25, 1944

Paul Hessemer  
75th Infantry Division  
290th Infantry  
Company C  
Chadds Fort, Pennsylvania

Our outfit had gone into action for the first time at Belle Haie the previous afternoon. The result was that our third platoon was killed or captured and the company was surrounded. The fighting ended at dark and we dug in. After midnight we sneaked back through the German lines for about 5 miles, arriving in Bra at dawn on Christmas Day.



"Downtown" Bra

As I sat with my buddies on my gear in the middle of the village wondering what was going on, I looked up and saw a paratrooper from the 504th Regiment that I knew from home--Rick Bertolette. He got out of high school three years before I

did but we were in Boy Scouts together and shared hiking and camping experiences. His dad had been our scout master.

When I went up to him and told him who I was, he greeted me warmly and invited me to a turkey dinner they were cooking. Before it was ready, we got orders to leave, and I never got my turkey dinner. As Earl reports, neither did they.

*Last fall, I saw rock Bertolette again, for the first time since our chance meeting in 1944, at a high school reunion of older classes. There he gave me a copy of a photo of "downtown" Bra, taken by a guy in his battalion who, somehow, carried a camera and took pictures throughout the war.*

.....

### ...A FURLOUGH IN PARIS?

December 25, 1944

Sydney O. Johnson  
3rd Armored Division  
83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion  
Company A  
Saratoga, California

Christmas Day--1944. The light dusting of snow during the night glistened in the bright morning sun. Crisp as a new Currier and Ives print, it was beautiful in spite of the hopeless situation. Surrounded by Nazi troops, it was our fifth day in the small Belgium town of Marcouray. Every attempt to help us--an air drop, special medical-laden artillery shells, rescue by one of our combat commands--was a dismal failure. What next? Without food and fuel, we were doomed.

Late in the afternoon, orders were given to quietly destroy our vehicles, all weapons, and any equipment which may be useful to the Germans. To avoid any suspicions, vehicles would be started in a random fashion over a period of time...after the oil was drained out. Fires and explosions were forbidden. After dark, we would infiltrate the enemy's territory, and return to our lines, about 10 or 12 miles towards the northwest. The orders were very specific: no fire-arms, no hand grenades, no helmets and no exceptions! The reasons were obvious: the use of any fire-arm would expose our position, and the steel helmets not only made a noise when brushed against a low branch, but also had a very distinctive silhouette. Also, no Walkie-Talkie radios, no blanket-rolls, no extra clothing, and no personal articles unless it fit comfortably in your pocket, like pictures.

In less than two hours, we demolished all of our equipment. Diabolical perhaps, but there is a certain satisfaction in destroying G(overnment) I(ssued) equipment, particularly when ordered to do so by an officer. Their orders relieved my deep-seated frustrations... the supreme catharsis.

The vehicles were idled without oil, tires were slashed, guns were field stripped and the parts scattered, radios were smashed and vacuum tubes broken. The well in front of our house became a giant trash receptacle; it was the final resting place for our spare radio parts, test equipment, ammunition, grenades, gun parts, my new dictionary, my trust portable radio (which I had nursed along since Normandy), and the Cryptograph which Sgt Porter had pulverized.

Most of my personal belongings and war souvenirs were in my barracks bag in Division Trains, but I always carried my German Walther P-38 Pistol on my gun belt. Even though I knew it was common practice for the SS to kill GIs who had any German

military equipment, I decided to take the chance that I wouldn't be captured. I hedged the beg, however, by putting the pistol into a woolen-knee sock, and tied a knot on the end for ease in carrying. I planned to hold the knot in my hand, allowing the gun to be close to the ground. In the event that I was taken prisoner, I'd ease the gun onto the ground...in the darkness, it wouldn't be noticed.

Now, and for the next 15 to 20 hours, 400 men were completely defenseless, and, without communications gear, we were without artillery protection. A single Kraut with a "Burp" gun could have become a national hero by capturing or killing 400 "combat hardened" American soldiers single-handed.

Our wounded who were not ambulatory had to remain behind while we slipped out of town. Several of our medics and our medical officer, Captain Wieger, volunteered to stay with the wounded. In spite of the Malmedy Massacre, we still played by the Rules of the Geneva Convention: Medics did not carry or handle weapons, and a Cross of Red was sacrosanct. To control the German prisoners while we made our escape, some of our wounded were given Thompson sub-machine guns, but not the medics.

"Frenchy," a French-speaking creole from New Orleans, who had become a good friend, during the past six months, decided that the risks of trying to escape without weapons was greater than the risks of staying in Marcouray disguised as an old Belgium woman. We tried to discourage him. By the Geneva Convention, he would certainly face the firing squad if we was detected, and the chances of getting caught were high because many Krauts didn't discriminate between women of different ages...sixteen to sixty. As I blackened my face and pulled my woolen cap over my ears, I asked "Frenchy" to come along...that his dark five o'clock shadow would give him away, but he stayed behind anyway. I don't know what happened to him.

Just after dusk we assembled on a road not too far from the church...no time to say "Goodbye and Good Luck" to the wounded and the medics. Final orders were given: stay in line, don't lose sight of the GI in front of you, no unnecessary talking, walk as quietly as possible, and if you are captured, only give your name, rank and serial number.

We moved out in a single file, at about ten foot intervals...400 GIs, one following another, who didn't know where they were going, but determined to find a way to the American lines. The clear moonlit Christmas night was bitter cold, and the ground was white with snow. I hadn't moved more than a few hundred yards along the edge of a field when a Nebelwerfer, a German rocket launcher well-known to GIs as a "screaming meemie," launched five quick consecutive rounds of 150mm rockets. Just the high screeching sounds of these missiles were enough to loosen the knots in my intestines. I swore. Of all the rotten luck, I thought; the Krauts had spotted us, and were moving in for the kill. They were determined to eliminate this little bump on their road to victory. The horrifying sounds were on our left flank, and the rounds exploded in the town which we had just left. Then a heavy artillery barrage ripped into the village. The wounded would be safe in the stone church unless it took a direct hit, but I wondered about "Frenchy." At least, we hadn't been detected.

The winter moon was high in the sky as we moved along the edge of a bright snow-covered field, heading for a heavy-wooded steep hill. Even though there was very little underbrush, the steep hill presented a tough physical challenge.... I thought that

I would never make the top. Unlike the many hogbacks in the Ardennes, the top of this hill was a large wooded plateau, like a mesa, with a deep ravine on the left side. As I moved over the plateau, I heard the distinctive squeak of tanks moving in the ravine, and the guttural voices of several Germans, who seemed to be shouting orders. The tank movements were brief as if they were trying to turn several large tanks around on a narrow valley road. I was familiar with their dilemma. The proximity of the enemy was of no immediate concern to me as the deep-wooded ravine provided a natural protective barrier, but it did give me food for thought. If 400 guys could move through enemy territory at night, then a four-man patrol could wander freely, undetected, in enemy territory under the cover of darkness. I wondered how many times a German patrol slipped by me during the past few months while I was on night time guard duty.

It was stop-and-go all night long as the scouts searched for a safe route. Tired, I sat and rested against a tree each time the column halted. Once I dozed off. When awakened by the guy next to me, I started to walk groggily in the wrong direction. He merely grabbed my arm, and pointed me towards the moving column. My error could have been disastrous; I remember it well.

Sometimes crossing a bright snow-covered field couldn't be avoided; risky, but there were no alternatives. We started to move downhill on such a field. In the bright moonlight, I could see a narrow road cut across the field at a right-angle, and a thick stand of trees just behind. I heard a vehicle in the distance, slowing moving toward us. Could that distant sound be a precursor of German imprisonment or of American freedom? I had no way of knowing. It sounded like a peep, but it could be a German patrol in a captured peep, or it could be a Volkswagen. A whispered command, coming from the front, was relayed up the column, "Close ranks, kneel with heads down, and remain still. Pass it on." From my position about halfway up the hill, I looked down at the guys crouched down in front of me. They looked like an old, slightly irregular, stonewall which ended less than a hundred feet from the road. Apparently, those who were near the road, crossed over it and were well-hidden in the dense woods.

I put my head down as the noise of the vehicle grew louder. Then, I heard the voices of several Krauts over the din of the motor as they drove by. As the noise faded into the distant countryside, I was prepared to move on...to catch up with the guys in the woods on the other side of the road. I feared that they would continue to press forward, and we wouldn't know in which direction they went. New orders were relayed in whispers, "Do not move!" Our scouts suspected that the German road patrol would return shortly...and they were right. A few moments later, the patrol returned, going in the opposite direction. Again I could hear the German talking. The whole scene was bizarre. This time I could see the shadowy Volkswagen moving slowly--right to left--a few hundred feet in front of me. I was prepared for the worst. Luckily, our "stonewall disguise" fooled them. When we could no longer hear them, we ran, single file, across the road into the woods, where our buddies were waiting for us.

The column stopped again. This time I was in a wooded area on the side of another steep hill. In spite of the orders to stay in line, three guys passed me--heading towards the front of the column...three abreast. The GI in the center had his arms around

the shoulders of the other two guys, and his knee was bent so that one foot did not touch the ground. They were very noisy as they tried to get through the light underbrush. I was grateful when they overcame their problem, and moved on...out of my area. The soldier in the middle was Colonel Hogan, who had twisted his ankle earlier in the evening. Carrying him, his two orderlies couldn't keep up with the column, so they kept walking when we were stopped. Later, we would pass this trio, and then they'd fall back towards the end of the line. Those poor orderlies worked all night with no rest periods.

At daybreak, we crossed a sharply-crested ridge which over looked a small field...about the size and shape of a football field. The surrounding hills were steep on three sides and covered with tall, straight trees having no low branches, much like telephone poles. The ridge on the opposite side tapered down until it was nearly even with the field. It reminded me of a football stadium, and I was high in the stands on the 35 yard line. No cheering crowds here; it was deadly quiet.

Two burned out Sherman tanks were on the "10 yard line" to my left. To the right, where there was a gap in the ridge line, a dozen or so bodies were scattered on the field, along with all sorts of small items of equipment, clothing, and debris. It was a sickening testimony to recent, violent battle. Even from my location, it was clear that the bodies were Americans.

We remained here, just below the ridge, for several hours--not in a single column, but in small groups--while the scouts probed the territory ahead of us. The Air Force Liaison officer was smart enough to bring along the air identification panels; the code for the day had been prearranged before the command radio was destroyed. The panels were laid out in an area where they could only be seen from the air. It was a good thing that we had the luminescent panels; the sky was clear and many P-47s were working the area.

The scouts had contacted an American outpost, an infantry road block on the far right of the field. With 399 other GIs, it didn't take me long to run down the hill, and sidestepping several bodies, to dash across the field to an American outpost. This field of dead GIs is indelibly foxed in my mind...particularly one young infantryman who was face down on the ground, his body partially covered with bloody frozen snow. The contents of his back-pack were strewn around him...Christmas wrappings and empty boxes. He never enjoyed the Christmas cookies and other goodies which, I was sure, his mom had sent to him. Sad. Some rotten Kraut bastard had a taste of American home cooking for Christmas. As I approached the infantrymen--members of the 75th Infantry Division, I believe--I looked back. The dichotomy of the scene was startling and unforgettable: the whiteness of snow and the darkness of death amid a field strewn with colorful, joyous Christmas wrapping paper and ribbons. The back-packs of all the dead GIs had been looted. Many Krauts ate well.

The infantry guys in the outpost--a hunter's shack on the edge of a small road--were expecting us. They had been told to keep their eyes open for several hundred GIs who were wandering around in their sector without helmets and rifles. They had spotted us earlier, but remained quiet rather than give away their position to the Krauts. When our scouts first contacted them, the infantrymen were a little skeptical, and threw several challenges at them..."Who hit 60 home runs?" "What is the name of Harry James' wife?"

Although I hadn't eaten much during the past few days, I felt

no hunger-pains until I reached this safe haven. One of the infantry guys gave me some of his rations...a small can of frozen beans, which I ate immediately, ice crystals and all...nothing ever tasted so good.

Before sundown, a convoy of 6 x 6's picked us up, and brought us to a rear echelon area, where we were reunited with the rest of the 83rd "Recon" Battalion. This particularly Task Force Hogan was dissolved; Hogan's 400 became Hogan's Heroes. I was overjoyed. Without vehicles, weapons, ammunition and other essential equipment, certainly "A" Company could remain inactive for a couple of weeks...maybe a month or so while being refitted. Considering the hazardous events of the past week we had earned a good long rest...maybe a furlough to Paris? Yeah, Gay Paree!!

.....

## 51 YEAR SEARCH HAS HAPPY ENDING

January 19, 1945

**Howard C. "Bud" Barish  
103rd Infantry Division  
411th Infantry  
3rd Battalion  
Company I  
Beverly Hills, California**

The date was January 19, 1945. It was the Battle of the Bulge and this particular encounter was called "The Session at Sessenheim." It involved four U.S. soldiers: two sergeants, one first lieutenant, and a major. These men have never met together since that day, but they are finally now planning to meet after 50 years and write the final chapter in one of the most incredible rescues in World War II.

I was one of the sergeants. The other sergeant saved my life, the lieutenant's life, and the lives of at least five other men. I had been trying to find the sergeant who saved my life for over 50 years. I finally found him in March of 1996.

We also have located the major (now a retired colonel) who gave the rescuing sergeant the necessary equipment and manpower to make the rescue possible.

Allow me to go back to the beginning. I was a 60mm mortar squad sergeant in the weapons platoon of Company I, 411th Infantry, 103rd Division, 7th Army. Prior to my becoming an infantry man, I was in the Army Specialized Training Program at the University of Oklahoma studying engineering. After nine months in the program, the Battle of the Bulge forced the army to cancel the engineering program we were all sent to Camp Howze, Texas to become infantrymen.

After a very fast training period, we were shipped overseas and rushed into combat. After several months of fighting in Alsace-Lorraine, we were transported by trucks to an area that I could tell was going to be trouble. As we drove through the woods, I saw huge Allied artillery guns pointed to the right and left of us. My fear of trouble soon became a reality.

The next morning we attacked. It was one of the bloodiest encounters of the Battle of the Bulge. We were fighting German SS troopers and it was the first time I ever was ordered to have my squad follow a tank into battle. It was also my first experience of being in a caravan that was strafed by enemy aircraft. There were seven tanks and I was to have my mortar squad follow tank #3. I didn't quite understand the logic in

having five men follow a tank into battle, but that wasn't the first time I didn't understand what was going on in the confusion of war.

When we heard several "88" shells go over our heads, I decided it was time for the tank to go its way and for us to go ours. I spotted a large hole in the ground about 50 yards away and the entire squad made a mad dash for it. We then sat there and watched what followed.

All seven tanks were knocked out almost immediately. Our platoon leader yelled for us to get behind a farm house about 300 yards from the City of Sessenheim and to set up our mortar. We fired two or three rounds into enemy emplacements in the city, but they were ready for us and dropped three artillery shells right on top of us. My gunner was killed. I didn't even realize that my left foot was hit until I tried to run. I fell to the ground.

We broke the window to the house. Everyone crawled in and headed for the basement.

We were all in the weapons platoon, machine gunners, mortar men, and ammunition bearers. Almost everyone was injured. The shell that landed exploded low to the ground and since most of the men were sitting behind the house, the injuries were to the head and upper body. Fortunately for me, I was standing, so a piece of shrapnel went through my foot taking out three bones and my medial planter nerve.

A voice from upstairs shouted, "The orders are to withdraw. Everyone go back to our attack point." Those that could walk or run took off. I crawled up the stairs and was climbing out the window when a shell hit the house. I decided my chances of survival without being able to run were not too good so I crawled back down into the basement. There were now four of us in that basement that were injured and unable to walk or run back.

In a short time, we heard German voices outside. We knew we were fighting SS troopers and rumors were that they don't take prisoners. We all had our pistols ready. To make matters worse, our allied planes began to bomb the city. It was a terrifying moment. We realized if the enemy didn't kill us, maybe our own planes would.

Around eleven o'clock we heard noises upstairs. Our guns were ready. It turned out to be an American sergeant dragging a first lieutenant that had been seriously injured by machine-gun fire. The sergeant was not hurt, but he was having great difficulty getting the lieutenant down the stairs because the lieutenant outweighed him by at least 70 pounds. The sergeant noticed a bottle of schnapps nearby, and after the lieutenant took one good swig, he was able to carry some of his own weight.

We learned later that this lieutenant had led the "L" Company attack into Sessenheim. He was immediately machine-gunned down. He had twelve bullet holes in his body. How he survived, no one will ever know. The sergeant, who was also in



"L" Company, but not the same platoon, risked his life to reach the lieutenant. He pushed, pulled, carried and finally wired his hands together and dragged him away from the battlefield. His objective was to reach the farm house we occupied now.

We spent the afternoon planning our escape. None of us could walk so we knew we would have to be carried. The sergeant volunteered to sneak out after dark and get a rescue team to get us out of there. He waited till dark and went out the back way. We heard a German "burp" gun go off seconds after he left and were sure they got him.

That night was the longest night of my life. Being wounded, hiding in enemy territory, expecting SS troopers, and having our would-be rescuer shot was the most frightening day in my life. But God answered our prayers. I was half asleep, half awake and somewhat delirious when the sergeant tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Come on, let's get out of here."

It was now around two a.m. and he had brought back ten litter-bearers to carry us out...I asked him how he got by that automatic "burp" gun. He said that was easy. The real problem was that when he got back to his company commander, he was told that it was too dangerous and he could not go back into Sessenheim nor could he take volunteers with him. He was threatened with a court martial if he or any volunteers went back into that city. But that didn't stop the sergeant. He managed to find a major operating from a command position in a pill box in the Maginot Line. The major provided him with several litter-bearer teams.

I always carried a small address book with me. I was in somewhat of a daze, I had enough presence of mind to ask the sergeant his name. I put the name "Sgt Scanlon, Company "L," 411th Infantry" in my address book. If I ever got out of there alive, I wanted to be able to find him and thank him.

Getting out of the farm house was not that simple. The enemy must have seen or heard the rescue attempt and fired rockets and 88's, and machine guns along our escape path. One of the litter-bearers carrying the lieutenant was hit in the leg.

In spite of the battle that was still raging, the major managed to keep his cool. In case we got out of the farm house alive, he had also arranged to have jeeps hidden near the farm house for our transportation to a hospital in Besancon.

After I was operated on in Besancon, I was transported by a hospital train in Marseille, and a few months later on a hospital ship to the United States. I arrived in the United States the day Roosevelt died. I then was sent to a hospital in California and was finally discharged in December, 1945, approximately one year after I was hit.

*One of my main goals in life was to find the man who saved my life. I called headquarters of the 7th Army and they could not help me. They said they did not have a Sergeant Scanlon listed anywhere in the 7th Army. They asked for his serial number. I said I didn't even know his first name. I only knew him as the sergeant who saved my life.*

*I called Washington. I called everywhere. No Sergeant Scanlon--no records of Sergeant Scanlon in the 411th Infantry, Company L. I spent several years writing, calling, and I was promised by several agencies that they definitely could locate him, but they never did. My wife, my daughter, and my sister--all called different branches of the service but to no avail. My daughter actually called Scanlons in different cities throughout the United States without success.*

*Last year, someone told me about a magazine called The Bulge*

*Bugle...* I subscribed to it and searched for the name "Scanlon" in each issue of the magazine. That didn't work. Last month, I called the secretary and asked her if she had any ideas on how to find a Sgt. Scanlon. She suggested I put a notice on page 9 of the "Members Speak Out" section and maybe someone who knew Scanlon might read it. I asked her for any other suggestions. She said the 103rd Infantry Division has a reunion every year. "Why don't you call them?", she asked.

I was shocked. I had never been invited to a 103rd reunion, nor was I aware that such an organization still exists from World War II. She gave me the 103rd phone number.

I called and asked my usual question: How do I find Sergeant Scanlon? She said she would send me a list of the names of everyone in Company L, 411th Infantry, but since there have been so many injured and killed, there are only about 20% of the original company left.

The following week I received a handwritten list of all the remaining names. I looked through the list. No Sgt. Scanlon. For some reason, I picked it up again and noticed the names were listed alphabetically. When I got to SCAN, I noticed a name, "Scannell." That's a far cry from Scanlon, but I decided to call anyway. Who knows? Maybe they were next to each other because the army always sorts people alphabetically. He was listed by telephone information as John Scannell in Allen Park, Michigan. The 103rd had him down as Jack Scannell.

I called and asked, "Mr. Scannell, were you in the Battle of the Bulge?"

He answered, "Yes."

My heart skipped a beat. Could this be the end of my search? "Were you in Company "L," 411th Infantry? I'm desperately looking for a Sergeant Scanlon who saved my life by carrying me out of a basement outside the City of Sessenheim."

There was a long pause and the voice on the other end said, "That was me."

We were both speechless. Tears were running down my cheeks. Maybe down his, too. When I could catch my breath, I said, "I've been looking for you for 51 years to thank you for saving my life."

We both could hardly talk. I think Jack was as excited as I was. We talked for at least two hours; and we're still talking almost every day.

Since then I've been in contact with Lt. Bill Sproesser in Delaware. Bill told me that when the two of them were lying on the battlefield, Bill asked Jack if he would be best man at his wedding. Jack tried to humor him and said, "Sure, as soon as we get out of this mess." (A year later, Jack was best man at Bill Sproesser's wedding.)

The 103rd is having a reunion on September 11-14 and Company "L" is having a reunion on October 4-7. Sgt. Jack Scannell will be there. Lt. William Sproesser will be there. Colonel Robert L. Crouch, Jr., the man who supplied Sgt. Scannell with the litter-bearer teams and the Jeeps plans to be there. Believe me, I will be there, too.

\*\*\*\*\*

THAT WAS THE BEGINNING....

December 16, 1944

Paul T. MacElwee  
100th Infantry Division

## 422nd Infantry

### Company C

#### Shamokin, Pennsylvania

The day was overcast and the weather was cold. I was with Company "C," 422nd Regiment of the 106th "Golden Lion" Infantry Division. A few days earlier we had replaced the Second Division that had been called back to the rear for rest and reassignment.

We lived in well-constructed log bunkers on the Schnee Eifel and we were probably deeper into German territory than any other Allied unit.

The day was December 16, 1944. The time was 7:00 a.m. The field telephone in our bunker rang and I answered.

"Hello," I called out.

"Is Sgt. Clark there?" a voice demanded.

"Not at the moment," I replied. Clark, our squad leader, was in the sack and I did not want to disturb him.

"Who is this?", the voice further demanded.

"MacElwee," I replied.

"MacElwee, this is Captain Kulzer." (Company Commander)

"Yes, sir," I replied with the proper respect.

"Do you hear any mechanized activity out in front of you?"

"Yes, sir, it's been going on for quite a while."

"How far from your position would you say the action is?"

"About 3,000 yards," was my guess.

"The Germans are on the move. Keep your heads down. We're going to throw over some heavy stuff."

A few minutes later artillery shells began screaming overhead toward the area of activity and the mechanized activity stopped.

Then it started up again and continued indefinitely.

This was the start of the Battle of the Bulge and my buddies and I were caught right in the middle of it.

Two days later, after we were moved to another area, we tried to fight our way out of the German trap. With our M1 rifles we were no match for the Germans with their mortar, machine guns and Tiger Tanks atop of which were .88 caliber cannon. The officers in charge of us decided to surrender to prevent our annihilation. Soon we were on our way to Stalag IV B located near Muhlberg on the River Elbe. We arrived at the camp at midnight December 31st, New Year's Eve.

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## MORE ON THE ILL-FATED MV LEOPOLDVILLE

*Many of you wrote about the Leopoldville article. Therefore, we felt you would be interested in this article which was sent to us by ERNIE FIGUEIRA, JR., 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 112TH INFANTRY, COMPANY K. This article was sent to Ernie by its author, E. P. "BILL" EVERHARD, who was in the 66TH INFANTRY DIVISION.]*

### SNAFU--CHRISTMAS EVE, 1944 E. P. "Bill" Everhard

SNAFU! A common word to any GI. Christmas Eve, 1944, over 2,000 members of the 66th Infantry Division were abandoned to one of the biggest SNAFUs of WWII, but one that never made the headlines. There are no white crosses to mark their graves.

The Battle of the Bulge was the news of the day. The German Army had launched a devastating offensive and we were suffering severe losses. Reinforcements were urgently needed.

My unit, known as the Black Panthers, had been stationed in England, near Dorchester, for just a few weeks, knowing it was a staging area for our next step across the English Channel. Christmas was almost on us, and none were looking forward to Christmas away from home. For some it would be their first. For others it would be their last. Many had arranged to hold small parties on the night of December 23, and had plans for a few of the local girls to attend. An ample supply of beer and music had been arranged.

At about noon on the 23rd, unexpected orders came saying that we were to be ready to move by 6:00 p.m. Trains took us to Southampton where we boarded a Belgian ship, *The Leopoldville*, being used by the British Navy as a troop transport. Loading went very slow. It seems that for some reason they were not expecting us! That afternoon, 2,000 paratroopers had been boarded, only to be told that they were on the wrong ship. We finally started to load about 2:30 in the morning of the 24th, and didn't finish until about 8:00 a.m. Because of the loading mix-up, no prior berthing assignments had been made for us, so the troops were assigned as they came aboard. Many units were split, separating men from squads and companies.

The ship was built in 1929 and to carry 360 passengers, but we topped that and loaded 2,223 troops of the 66th and a crew of 237 onto the ship that my runner, Pfc. Leo Zarnosky, now of Oliphant, Pennsylvania, said, "What a helluva looking boat," and speculated, "I don't think we'll make it across, let's swim." It was a tired old boat, run down and dirty. The crew consisted of 120 Belgians, 93 Congo natives, and 24 British, who manned the guns. The ship had 14 lifeboats which they said would accommodate 799 passengers, and floats, which were designed to carry an additional 2,635, lashed by cables to the open decks.

Along with many others, I have tried for almost 50 years to bury my memories of a night of fear, terror and grief. All of us have been helped in this attempt to forget by the governments of the United States, Great Britain, and Belgium. Together they worked hard to cover up and hide one of the biggest SNAFUs of WWII which needlessly and negligently took the lives of over

800 U.S. soldiers on Christmas Eve, 1944. It was the European Theater's second worst naval disaster in WWII, and one of the most tragic and senseless blunders of the war, including the reluctant way military leaders informed the families of those lost.

One of the soldiers lost was Angelo Catalano, a 21-year-old from New York. For 44 years his family knew that he was "killed in action" without knowing any details. In 1989, through the 66th Panthers Veteran Organization, they learned the circumstances of his death, so three Catalano brothers and a sister traveled to France with PVO members to cast a wreath from a French Naval ship over the site of the sunken *Leopoldville*.

I am afraid there are still families who don't know the story of what happened to their loved ones.

I was a 21-year-old 2nd Lt. in Company B, 264th Regiment. As a platoon leader I was responsible for the lives of 37 men.

As an officer, I was assigned to a cabin which I shared with three fellow officers and friends. It was a small cabin, midship, probably made for two people and was located at the end of a very long passageway. I don't remember what deck we were on, but I'm certain it was below the water line as we went down numerous flights of stairs to reach our level. It was crowded, the air was hot, stuffy, and still. What we had was a palace compared to the troop compartments, which had been made from converted cargo space. The hatches, normally used to load the holds, were about 40 feet square and had been covered over at each deck level with wood flooring. Steep wood stairs were built through these floors. To get to the bottom deck, you used these stairs through each level. Ceilings were low, bunks or hammocks were stacked four high. (We thought three high was tight coming across the Atlantic.) Aisles between the tiers was narrow. Ventilation was next to nonexistent. What little floor space left was covered with packs, rifles, duffel bags and steel helmets. Movement was difficult at best.

We sailed from Southampton about 9:00 a.m. Somewhere in the Channel we joined a convoy of several ships, including a British destroyer, *HMS Brilliant*, under the command of Capt. John Pringle who was also the convoy commander. The water was rough and many aboard were seasick. The severe cold forced most of their quarters below deck.

Shortly after boarding, each unit had verbally been assigned to an assembly area on deck, but we never had an "Abandon Ship Drill." Other than knowing the approximate deck area, no assignment had been made for lifeboats and rafts. Life belts were loose in the compartment areas, but were not assigned.

A major blunder was that no one bothered to tell the troops that a Kapock life jacket would snap a man's neck if the wearer did not hold the collar down when hitting the water. Many of the soldiers did not have a jacket to fasten. No instructions were given as to how to lower lifeboats or free the rafts. That was the crew's job. Lifeboards were inboard. In contrast, moving over the Atlantic with the U.S. Navy, the boats were turned out and ready to lower, and daily boat drills were conducted with all troops and crew participating.

At 2:00 p.m. the ship was ordered to zigzag as a German U-Boat was reported to be roaming the Channel. We could see the escorts around and felt pretty safe. If we had known that a ship had been sunk by a U-Boat on this same approach to Cherbourg Harbor just the day before, we would have felt much different.

Bob Desnoyer, of Granada Hills, California, remembers troops showing gifts and cards received from family and friends, and especially remembers the loss of a sweater his wife, Rita, had

knitted for him. Frank Gray, now of Bakersville, California, said his platoon sergeant, who had a special fondness for him, gave him KP duty. They were sent to the deck where they found dozens of trays full of bowls from breakfast caked with oatmeal, dried and hard. They had cold water and limp brushes, no soap. After 30 minutes, hands numb with cold, one of the "more intelligent" said, "This ain't working. To Hell with it," loaded a tray full and dropped the whole thing overboard. Ten seconds later the rest followed suit and headed below to warm up.

The first warning of impending enemy action came about 3:30, when the escort destroyers circled close dropping depth charges. After an hour's hunt, the destroyers returned to formation.

I have no recollection of a lunch meal, but do remember that we were going to start serving dinner to our troops about 6:30 p.m. I ate something about 4:30.

At 5:54, a Navy guard in the aft crow's nest shouted that he had seen the bubbles of a torpedo passing a few feet from the stern. A second later he called "Torpedo to the Starboard."

I was back in my cabin stripped down, laying on my bunk trying to get some sleep before I was scheduled to help with the troop feeding when there was a terrific explosion that threw me out of my bunk. In seconds, an alarm bell started to ring, and I was grabbing for my clothes and trying to lace my boots. Two of my cabin mates were dressed and left immediately for top side. The other officer was also trying to find and put on his clothes. Just as I was ready to leave the cabin there was a loud rumbling roar coming from within the ship. The floor pitched, and I was thrown to the deck of the passageway. The cabin door slammed shut behind me with the cabin mate still inside. Almost immediately water began covering the floor and was rising rapidly. He was hollering and trying to pull the door open. It was jammed. I was pushing and pounding from the hall. I could find nothing to use as a ram. I beat and kicked at the door with all my strength. It would not move. The water was at my arm pits when the lights in the passageway went dead. God help me, I could do no more. I pulled myself along the ceiling toward the staircase. The water continued to rise and I was alone and as scared as I have ever been in my life. When I reached the stairs and climbed, I was numb. I could not believe what was happening. I never saw my friend again. I climbed until I got to open deck.

In the starboard down in the compartments below the water line, most of the soldiers were asleep when the torpedo ripped through the steel hull of the boat and exploded with a blinding flash. Shock of the terrific blast obliterated the compartments in the vicinity of the strike. Men were smashed against walls of the hold. Steel beams and girders supporting the hull were snapped like match sticks and the sea poured in, snuffing out those who still remained, buried alive under the debris. Staircases which should have offered an avenue of escape were demolished. Cries of wounded were quickly quieted by the intruding waters as the stricken compartments were filled with water. Numerous men displayed unbelievable courage and total disregard for their safety by going down into the compartments by rope looking for survivors. An outstanding example was Lt. Col. Ira Romberg, Commander of the 1st Battalion, 264th Regiment. Even after doing a Herculean job in rescuing men, Col. Romberg, wounded, ordered himself lowered again through a jagged hole into a flooded compartment to seek out a drowning Pantherman. In this final act, although he was unsuccessful in saving the soldier, he so exhausted himself that when the ship went down he was

unable to save himself. Col. Romberg was not alone; however, many heroes died that night.

Walter Blunt, of L Company, 262nd, now of Phoenix, Arizona, said, "I was awakened by a deafening noise so great it is difficult to find words to fully describe its awesomeness. Almost immediately I was engulfed in water as the compartment filled and there was total darkness. As the water buoyed me upward, I felt equipment and objects bumping against me. I heard screams and muffled cries as my head surfaced the water. I could taste the oil in the water and smell the stench of gunpowder smoke. I was dazed, but aware enough to wonder if I was now doomed to die. My next awareness found me wedged in a hole which must have been the deck of E compartment. My head and part of my shoulders were above the floor but I couldn't move. I was wedged too tightly. I could see right out to the ocean. There were waves washing over me and then there would be a pause. I held my breath during the time the waves washed over me, but each time the water stayed longer and was getting deeper. I thought it was a Hell of a way to die. The next thing I know, there was a light shining down on me and the voice I recognized as that of Capt. Orr, my company commander, said "Give me your hand, son, you'll be all right." After a few minutes of pulling and struggling, I was lifted from the hole." Only one lifeboat left the ship carrying GIs. Blunt was in that boat along with others who had been wounded in the explosion. Seventy-four of Blunt's 181 man unit were lost, 61 were injured.

Away from the explosion area there was little confusion. We knew nothing of the carnage in the stricken holds and were not aware that no one in Cherbourg had any idea that we were in trouble. Capt. Pringle, the convoy commander, sent a message from the *Brilliant* to Portsmouth, England, but it took 45 minutes before this message was relayed back to Cherbourg.

By now the *Leopoldville* had drifted to within three miles of the harbor entrance and dropped anchor. One report claimed that the Belgian Captain, Charles Limbor, gave an order to "abandon ship," but it was in Flemish and not understood by the GIs. Troops were heading to the assembly areas. John Pordon, of Sonoma, California, still wants to know why he was told to take his helmet and cartridge belt up on deck when the torpedo hit. "What for?" Later he was told to discard the helmet and combat boots. He had no qualms about throwing away the helmet, which he had always hated, but kept his boots.

I, too, was heading for our assembly area, but I found none of our company. Deck lights and the PA system were still operating, but it was giving conflicting information and nothing of any great importance. Few people reached their designated areas, and those who did were constantly told to "clear the deck" and "make way for the crew." During our Atlantic boat drills, it was pounded into us "Always make way for the crew." Now we saw crew running here and there and always the troops cleared their way. Just before the lights and PA system went out, we had been told that we would be towed to port. The lights of Cherbourg were easy to see, so it was hard to believe that we could be in danger when we were that close to shore. From then on, we heard nothing but rumors. "Stay on deck." "It's not too bad." "We're sinking fast." "Thank God, we have these life belts." "These life belts are no damn good." Almost an hour went by with no one knowing what was going on. The crew were everywhere. We realized they were putting their personal property and gear into the lifeboats, and then started to



lower them into the water. They were full of crew! We stood. We watched. We thought there must be a plan, a reason for what they were doing. There was. It's called deserting your ship. The crew used all available lifeboats in sight and saved themselves. GIs tried unsuccessfully to loosen and ready the life raft tie down cables, but couldn't. No crew helped the attempt! No rafts were released. Pete Wood, of Bethesda, Maryland said that "when some of the crew started lowering lifeboats, there was cheering from the troops who thought the crewmen were getting the boats ready for us to use, but it stopped when we realized that they were abandoning ship themselves. The seas were quite heavy and even the crewmen had a bad time with the lifeboats. They kept getting the ropes snarled and had trouble lowering the boats to deck level so they could get in. One boat tipped over and spilled the crew into the sea. There didn't appear to be any rescue attempts even for them by other crewmen. They just kept trying to lower more boats." Wood went on to say, "A very special thing happened at about that time. The picture is still vivid. Hundreds of infantry soldiers, standing on the deck of a sinking ship; lifeboats gone or hopelessly snarled; crew abandoning ship. A soldier close by started singing "The Star Spangled Banner." Soon, everyone was singing. It didn't matter that not many knew all the words. I didn't but I could hardly sing anyway because I kept choking up. I still do, even now, almost 50 years later."

The ship was listing badly to port side. I was on the high side about midship, and was now convinced that the ship was going down. The British destroyer, *Brilliant*, pulled alongside and it's captain called, "You are sinking fast, save yourselves." It was the only "Abandon Ship" order ever heard. Some men never found life jackets. Others had discarded them during the long wait on deck. Now they wanted one. It was then that I finally saw a man from my platoon, a very young boy, sobbing and scared to death. I can see his face still. I tried to reassure and comfort him. He cried, "I don't know how to swim." I gave him my life jacket. I never saw him again. He was among the missing. He was a nice kid. I have been told by a friend of his, Carson Kirk, that "his mother always set his place at the table for a long time after the war, thinking that someday he would return."

The destroyer tried repeatedly to come alongside, but in the heavy sea it kept going out and then crashing back against our ship. Men started to jump. Many jumped wearing their overcoats, helmets, and life jackets. Many mistimed their jump and fell screaming into the sea between the ships. Then the ships would crash back together and crush the men in the water. Men, thinking about jumping, stared at the bodies in the water and backed away, even though destroyer crew members were shouting "Jump mates." I watched for a while trying to figure out in my mind when a jump should be made. I spoke to those who would listen and told them to take off their coats and helmets, keeping their life jackets. There was a sudden enjoyment in following an order to throw away hated steel helmets, but dozens were disposed of by throwing them overboard right down toward people who were still alive between the ships. I talked a few men into standing on a railing and wait for me to give an order to jump. It worked, and more men took their places on the rail.

With each successful jump, the number up for the next jump grew. Some men held back a little too long before jumping and were lost, but I don't believe we lost one who jumped at the

exact time he was told to. It was a hard order to obey because the ships were at the greatest distance apart and were just beginning to close when I gave the order to jump. I had to help in organizing the jumpers. Everybody was ready, willing and waiting to be told what to do. Help was plentiful. We had groups of 10 to 15 jumping each time. The crew of the destroyer were lined up at the rail ready to reach for the men as they landed. Some were caught as they fell a little short and grabbed for the destroyer rail. A couple of men, carrying a man strapped into a stretcher, came to the rail and wanted to get him on the destroyer. It was obvious that he was badly injured, but still conscious. We straddled the rail and threw the stretcher as hard as we could. We missed.

Our area of the deck was just about clear and I decided it was time for me to go. I leaned forward, let go and pushed out. When I landed on the destroyer deck and looked back, I threw up. I was literally sick to my stomach. The upper deck was crawling with men, and I realized that hundreds were still on board. The jump from the upper deck was 25-30 feet. I don't know how many arms and legs were broken by that jump. I started again to direct the jumping between ships. When I could get them to listen, they would go over and down the outside of the ship to the deck I had just left. Again, I was counting their jump time.

The destroyer had been damaged by the repeated pounding and was supposed to be taking water itself. We stayed just a few more minutes and the ropes were cut releasing the two ships. Now men were swarming down the side of the *Leopoldville* trying to get on the destroyer before it left. By this time, the water was infested with men. Everywhere you looked, you saw men bobbing in the waves calling for help and waving their arms trying to be seen. The destroyer pulled away.

I was led below by a crewman, where I found some floor to sit on, dropped down and found myself sitting next to Ray Novak, my company CO. I was wet and very cold. I remember nothing more about the trip to shore or the unloading. The next thing I was aware of, I was lying on a blanket on the floor of a large warehouse type building. Hundreds of others just like me lined the floor from wall to wall. I was alive. 802 of the 2,235 GIs died. Of the crew of 237, only 17 were lost.

Still on the *Leopoldville*, frantic but pathetic last-minute attempts were made by GIs to release life rafts, evening trying in the darkness to hack heavy ropes with small pen knives. There was confusion everywhere now, as all order disappeared and it was every man for himself. As fast as they could reach the railing, men leaped into the sea to get away from the floundering ship. In the water, men clustered together in small knots, clinging to one another, trying to get away from the suction of the sinking ship. The *Leopoldville* began to sink. With a frightening hiss of escaping air, the doomed vessel stood almost straight up in the water, stern down and bow up. Spotlights from rescue vessels revealed many Panthermen still clinging to the disappearing bow as the *Leopoldville*, with a never-to-be-forgotten moan, sank into the dark waters of the English Channel. Momentarily the confusion in the water eased as men watched the fearsome spectacle.

Five lifeboats and hundreds of life floats, enough to have saved everyone lost, were still secured to the transport as she made her final plunge. *Leopoldville's* captain was still on the bridge as she slipped to the bottom!

Inside the Cherbourg harbor, just three miles away, a Navy

salvage tug, easily capable of towing the *Leopoldville*, lay at her berth. Her captain watched through binoculars, but receiving no request for tow, thought our ship must have had a "minor breakdown."

Colonel Richard Lee, Harbor Entrance Command, was on shore watching. He reports that Capt. Pringle, of the *Brilliant*, signalled "coming in with survivors." Lee asked, "Survivors of what?" Eventually the message came, "Want Assistance." Lee then, guessing the *Leopoldville* might need a tow, sent out a tug and later a PT boat who reported by radio "*Leopoldville* sinking." Then, and only then, almost three hours after the torpedo hit, were all available crafts sent out of the harbor, but the ship went down before they got there. Darkness and choppy water made the job of picking up survivors painfully slow. Many were forced to cling to floating debris, or rafts thrown from rescue ships, for more than an hour before they were picked up. Some who drifted away had to wait even longer for rescue.

Our Company 1st Sgt. C. P. Wood, of Cathedral City, California, described the scene. "The ship began to settle by the stern. We threw the rope over, and a couple of men started down the side of the ship. By the time my turn came, the water was at my feet and I just dove head first off the rail. Up until then I thought I was a good swimmer, but I soon found that no matter where you wanted to go, the waves made the final decision. Funny thing about swimming. One boy in the company jumped overboard, swam to a tug, climbed aboard and helped the crew. I know he had never been able to swim a stroke before. Others, good swimmers, were lost. I swam away from the ship as fast as I could. I also wanted to get away from the crowd of men in the water. Some would grab onto anything near them, making it hard to stay afloat. I tried to get a life raft one of the tugs had dropped, but again there were too many men. I finally found a hand hold on a rubber raft, enough for one hand. We floated round a long time listening to the cries of the men. Some prayed, some called for their mothers, and others just yelled. The tugs were floating through the men, picking up every one they could grab. One finally came near to us. I was lucky and grabbed a line. I had myself half way out of the water, but could go no further. My hands were so cold I couldn't grip the line. A couple of men grabbed me, pulled me over the rail and rolled me over out of the way on the deck."

Another survivor, George Baker, of Canoga Park, California, when asked to give his story, said that he was truly sorry, but could not. "That Christmas Eve, when I with so many others jumped into the sea, filled with oh so many boys crying out to God and Mother, is just something that I do not want to recall."

The "History of Naval Operations" reported that "over 1,000 men were left afloat (water temperature 48°F) without life jacket lights which were on board the *Leopoldville*, but not issued." Rescue crews later said that finding the men in the dark, using spotlights and even flashlights, was severely hampered by the lack of jacket lights, but the Panthermen were universal in their praise of the rescue crews.

Investigations of the sinking were spotty and without coordination between the military and governments involved. The British Admiralty's Board of Inquiry, in the "secret" report of April 1945, made note of the "exemplary" behavior of the U.S. troops, but went on to say that the ship's officers and crew "appear to have carried out their duties in accordance with the best traditions of the Belgian marine." The only recommendation of consequence they made was to stress the

importance of issuing life jacket lights. The whole report was less than three pages and remained classified "secret" until the last 1960's.

The Belgian Embassy, in 1992, after many previous information requests had gone unanswered, finally provided limited information with the explanation that their Research and Study Center maintains no archives of documents. Their material totally exonerates the crew members of any wrong doing, and reports that the lifeboats were all put to sea with soldiers board!

The U.S. Inspector General, on November 23, 1959, 15 years after the sinking, declassified and released a summary of their report which had been withheld from the public for "morale reasons." It read in part, "No official Abandon Ship order was given. If such order had been given, it is reasonable to believe that fewer men would have been lost. The crew of the *Leopoldville* was negligent in performance of their duties. They were not at their posts instructing passengers, reporting condition of the ship, and launching lifeboats. They seemed interested only in themselves."

Pringle, Captain of the *Brilliant* and Convoy Commander, came in for his share of criticism for failing to advise Cherbough immediately of the seriousness of the situation. Many requested why it took 38 minutes to dock and another 45 minutes to unload the survivors, effectively preventing them from making another rescue attempt.

Sgt. Richard McDermott, a survivor, now of Gallup, New Mexico, described the training of the Panthers better than anyone ever will. "The conduct of the troops should be recorded in the annals of military history as among the finest examples of discipline ever observed. Each of us stood in blind obedience awaiting orders. The tragedy is that there were no orders. No army personnel were qualified to make the required decisions."

General George C. Marshall, when advised by memo on January 6, 1945, of the details surrounding the sinking, responded in part, "Had this disaster occurred in peacetime, it would have been regarded as a shocking scandal. The loss of life of trained and equipped combat soldiers is all the greater reason for us to take appropriate action to follow through." Unfortunately, it never happened!

Those of us who survived will never forget the 802 men who died for us 50 years ago. Memories of that night remain vivid. If we continue to bring out the real truth and give tribute to those who made the supreme sacrifice, those who live with the memory may have some peace of mind.

[The only book written about this tragedy is "*A Night Before Christmas*," was written in 1963.]

## **DID YOU SERVE IN THE U.S. MILITARY AT AGE 16 OR UNDER?**

If you did, we want you!

Veterans of Underage Military Service is a non-profit organization of almost 900 veterans who served in all branches from ages 12-16. Our "Underage Veterans Handbook: Government Policy on Underage Veterans" will be sent free of any underage veteran who requests one.

For information write: George Brouse, National Commander, 100 Village Lane, Philadelphia Pennsylvania 19154.

## BOOKS YOU MAY ENJOY

The following books have been generously donated to our library. We thank those who submitted them and know that someday these will serve as a vital reference.

*Remembrances--My Journey Through a War*, by Robert L. Parsons, Jr., 83rd Division, 331st Infantry, Company F. A compilation of remembrances, that are serious, heartfelt, agonizing, and sometimes humorous. Cost including postage and handling is \$18.00, payable to Forest Hills Baptist Church. Order from the church at: 2101 Old Hickory Boulevard, Nashville, Tennessee 37215.

*Operation: Memories--Incredible Stories of World War II Veterans* as told to Evelyn I. Gregory. Individual stories from GIs in the Pacific and European Theaters and others. Cost including postage and handling is \$29.95, payable to Senior Distributor. Order from Senior Distributor at: PO Box 185, Vineburg, California 95487.

*Donald's Story* written by Donald's niece Sandra Merrill. This story of Captain Donald R. Emerson, 4th Fighter Group, based at Debden, England, deals with Donald's life. Not only is the book a great tribute to a Mustang pilot who gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country, but it also reveals how his loss affected his family. The book uniquely tells three stories in one: the lives of Donald and his family, the general history of the 4th Fighter Group, and Merrill's fascinating voyage of rediscovery. Cost including postage and handling is: \$17.45 (MD residents add 5% sales tax). Order from: Tebidine Publishing, 11431 Assateague Road, Berlin, MD 21811.

*The Lion's Share* by Donald J. Young. Not just a realistic account of the Battle of the Bulge, but also a surrealistic picture of soldiers on the edge of a precipice, in the blinding snow of the German mountains. The novel depicts the first days of the Bulge; reactions of GIs to their first shelling by enemy artillery; their first battle with enemy soldiers, and the courageous actions of their comrades. The story traces the lives of several POWs. Cost is \$10.00, including shipping and handling. Order from: Avranches Press, 1700 Cheryl Way, Aptos, CA 95003--indicate if you would like the copy autographed.

*Normandy to the Bulge* by Richard D. Courtney. Based on his original diary, Courtney tells what it was like to be a combat infantryman in America's biggest war. He gives a day-by-day account of his antitank platoon--part of the 104th Infantry Regiment of the 26th Infantry Division--as it fought from Normandy to the Battle of the Bulge to the end of the war in Czechoslovakia. He shares his own thoughts and those of his fellow soldiers as the horror of war descends on the snows of the Ardennes, where the antitank platoon is dug in at a

crossroads in Luxembourg, where they were pinned down for sixteen days. Cost is \$33.45 with shipping and handling (Illinois residents add \$1.87 per copy). Order from: Southern Illinois Press, PO Box 3697, Carbondale, Illinois 62902.

*Drawing Fire: A Combat Artist at War (Pacific, Europe, Korea, Indochina, Vietnam)* by Howard Brodie. Stirring drawings of life in combat: Excerpts from Foreword written by Walter Cronkite: "Despite the best that the finest war correspondent could do, it took the poet to capture the depth of a soldier's emotion. And despite the best the finest combat photographer could do, it took the artist to capture the mood of war and those who waged it. ...great news value with their honesty and powerful spirit of urgency and spontaneity. ...leave an enduring, even haunting, impression that stays in my mind." Cost is \$20.95 with shipping and handling. Order from: Portola Press, 848 Sonia Way, Mountain View, California 94040. (An example of Brodie's sketches appears below.)

### "VJ DAY"



## REUNIONS

**30TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 17-20, 1997, The Gault House, Louisville, Kentucky. Contact: Dick Jepsen, 409 Lookout Drive, Manhattan, Kansas 66502. Telephone: 913-539-4816.

**94TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, May 19-31, 1997, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Contact: Harry Helms, 609 Dogwood Drive, Downingtown, Pennsylvania 19335.

**110TH AAA GUN BATTALION**--Trying to form a reunion for 1998. Contact: Howard W. Mueller, 9505 Sequoia, St. Louis, Missouri 63123

**555TH, 563RD, 564TH, 566TH, 573RD SIGNAL AIR WARNING BATTALIONS, RADAR, WWII** August 28-30, 1997, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Contact: James Lynn, 3855 Utah Place, St. Louis, Missouri 63116. Telephone: 314-771-2928.

Received too late for timely announcement, but you may wish to write to them:

**691ST TANK DESTROYER BATTALION**. Write to Larry Miller, #Br341, 719 Maiden Choice Lane, Baltimore, Maryland 21228-6123. Telephone: 410-242-6020.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 1996 REUNION IN CAPE COD

by JACK HYLAND, 84TH INFANTRY DIVISION

When Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge gather for a reunion, you can be sure that there will be stories of the Ardennes in December-January 1944-45 that will be remembered and retold. There will be personal reunions with comrades of 51 years ago, moments of sadness remembering beloved buddies who gave their lives in our battle so many years ago, and a spirit of fellowship among those able to be together again.

Those feelings and more were felt by the over 400 VBOB members, their families and friends who gathered in Hyannis, Massachusetts, for our 16th Annual Reunion Sunday, September 8th to check-out time Thursday, September 12th.

From the welcome wine and cheese reception Sunday night at the Cape Codder (headquarters hotel) to the afterglow of the annual banquet Wednesday night, VBOBers had a busy schedule of events, but still found plenty of time to renew acquaintances, and swap tapes of the Ardennes woods.

There were many highlights--from Monday's whale watching boat trip, and Wednesday's excursion of the "Plimouth" Plantation, where the Pilgrims landed. While a foggy drizzle forced cancellation of the harbor cruise, it didn't dampen the spirits of those signed up, and they enjoyed a tour of the Hyannis area as a substitute.

But of particular significance to all VBOB members, and especially those from the New England area, the high point of the reunion was the unveiling Tuesday morning, September 10th, of a new Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Memorial on the Common Green of Hyannis. While a World War II P-51 Mustang, piloted by retired Navy Commander Robert Ferguson flew through the morning haze, a crowd estimated by police at over 600 gathered for a most moving ceremony.

The Dedham American Legion Post Color Guard led the parade of dignitaries to the rostrum on the green and posted the colors to begin the ceremonies. John McAuliffe, president of the Massachusetts VBOB Chapter, introduced National President Stanley A. Wojtusik, who welcomed the assembled crowd to the event, and noted that the monument to be unveiled is the first VBOB memorial in the New England area. He also thanked Charles DeChristopher, the Philadelphia designer who donated the monument.



Left to right: President Wojtusik, Mrs. Jean Gavin, and Executive Vice President George Linthicum at monument dedication ceremonies.

Mrs. James M. Gavin, widow of General James Gavin, wartime leader of the 82nd Airborne Division, and VBOB Executive Vice President George Linthicum unveiled the monument. Mrs. Gavin told those assembled how proud she was to be part of this important event, because so often General Gavin had told her that this was the most bitter battle of his career.

The ceremonies at the monument were well covered by the media in the Cape Cod area, with television news stories, and with front page stories in the local papers. The monument is in a central location, near the John F. Kennedy Museum, and has already become an attraction for Hyannis residents and Cape Cod visitors.

The VBOB business meeting held Tuesday afternoon drew a full-house, where the endorsed slate of officers, headed by President Wojtusik was approved by unanimous voice vote. During the meeting Vice President for Chapters and Regions, Grover Twiner reported on new chapters being formed throughout the country, showing that we are attracting new members in new regions.



President Wojtusik (left) and Lou Cunningham (right) arrive at headquarters hotel with Ambassador Alphonse Berns (center).

The official closing ceremonies for the 1996 reunion took place Wednesday night when over 400 VBOBers and guests met for the annual banquet. Many Bulge veterans had the opportunity to greet a great friend of VBOB, Ms. Tillie Krimmens, who represented CEBA, the Luxembourg Battle of the Ardennes Society, and had flown in for the reunion.

She was joined on the dais by His Excellency Alphonse Berns, Luxembourg's Ambassador to the United States, who spoke eloquently of the gratitude the government and people of Luxembourg feel for the American GIs who fought to bring freedom twice in four months to his country. Ambassador Berns, himself has been a loyal friend of VBOB, and participated in ceremonies at the unveiling of our monument at Valley Forge Military Academy & College in November, 1994.

The banquet was the final formal event of the reunion, and as it drew to a close good-byes were said, addresses and telephone numbers exchanged and updated, and VBOBers, families and friends prepared to depart...another reunion filled with memories, and with fond hopes we can all be together again for our 1997 annual reunion.

# BATTLE of the BULGE REENACTMENT

24-26 January 1997  
Fort Indiantown Gap, PA  
Register by 21 December 1996

The annual Battle of the Bulge Reenactment will be held the 24-26 January at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. The reenactment sponsored by The Federation (of Reenactors) will host between 900-1000 Allied and German Reenactors to commemorate the 52nd anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. They have especially invited Veterans to attend and to stay in the Barracks and relive the comradeship and bonding that existed among fellow Army buddies. Each year about a hundred Bulge veterans have gathered for this annual event. It is a great weekend of good cheer, good food and entertainment in addition to adding authenticity for the reenactors who enjoy talking to you and honoring you the veterans who endured that greatest land battle, The Battle of the Bulge. Dave Shaw and Larry Tucker of the Federation will again be our hosts. If you haven't attended in the past you have missed a great opportunity to let your hair down, relax and relive things when your life was younger, your hair fuller and the only thing you had to worry about was KP and the Guard Duty list, not to mention getting shot at. See the reenactors recreate the barracks atmosphere and sights of the time. Enjoy the time-warp. The cost is a bargain at \$ 35 for two nights in the barracks and breakfast and dinner on Saturday.

- Option C: Barracks & Meals @ \$35.00**  
**Option D: Barracks & No Meals @ \$15.00**  
**Option E: No Barracks - Meals only @ \$20.00**

You must register by 21 December 1996. Please send registrations to The Federation, Inc. PO Box 1360, Leesburg, VA 22075. Make checks or money orders out to The Federation. You may get a flyer with complete instructions as well as

the Registration Form and Waiver by contacting John D. Bowen, 613 Chichester Lane, Silver Spring MD 20904, Tel 301-384-6533. It would be helpful if you would send a stamped self-addressed #10 envelope (standard letter size) with your request.

Option C: Consists of Registration fee and quarters Friday and Saturday nights in the authentic World War II barracks plus Breakfast and Dinner on Saturday. Fee is \$35.00

Option D: Consists of Registration fee and quarters Friday Night and Saturday nights in the authentic World War II barracks on authentic GI Bunks. There are no meals associated with this option. Fee is \$15.00.

Option E: Consists of Registration fee and Breakfast and Dinner on Saturday but no barracks. This is for those who will be staying with spouse in a Motel or will be coming down for the day and not staying overnight.

Spouses are welcome to attend activities and meals and there will be a separate barracks *for females only* if they want to partake of barracks living for the weekend. There are *no co-ed* accommodations on the post. All barracks have modern latrines. Remember that this is barracks living so if you wife is not aware of barracks living you need to indoctrinate her before she experiences it. Otherwise a list of nearby motels is available for those wishing those accommodations.

Souvenirs: One of the highlights of the Veterans' barracks are the WWII Souvenirs, books and photos that veterans are encouraged to bring to show and tell for the enjoyment of other veterans and reenactors. *Please do not bring live ammunition, grenades or simulators.*

Flea Market: There will be a flea market of WWII era items that the Reenactors sell and trade. It is interesting to see the abundance of material that is on display.

Bring sheets, a blanket and a pillow or a sleeping bag. Official GI Mattress, GI Bunk and GI Wall-Locker is provided.

**24-26 January 1997**  
**Mark your Calender**

## BOOKS YOU MAY ENJOY (Continued from Page 27)

### BULGE TACTICS TRACED BACK TO MEXICAN WAR

It took small unit commanders, poorly supplied outnumbered but crack troops, who, without consulting each other, acted in a concerted manner to accomplish the necessary tactical tasks to win. These elite troops demonstrated the unique qualities of bravery which have carried U.S. arms to victory throughout American history.

Sound familiar? Battle of the Bulge? No. The U.S. Army also did those things in the 1846-48 Mexican War. In the Mexican War, for the first time in an American war, the skill of the junior officers was almost on a par with the bravery of the soldiers.

A much-honored Bulge tradition, as in the Mexican War, was that American soldiers are known for their devotion to duty and to their strong feeling of comradeship with their comrades in arms. Fighting men left hospitals before they were fully healed and went back to their units because they thought their buddies needed them. The tradition began in the Mexican War and Bulge veterans lent lustre to the tradition.

A novel, *FIX BAYONETS - CHARGE!* by VBOB life member and former Bugle editor, Roy Gordon (47th Infantry Regiment, Ninth Infantry Division), tells of the youth of the leaders on both sides in the Civil War. Their exploits show they could have fitted in at the Bulge.

Leadership, for instance: Lee, Grant, and others, in their youth in the Mexican War showed their unique qualities. They also observed and evaluated fellow West Pointers and used techniques such as Colonel Jefferson Davis' training of his early command, First Mississippi Rifle Regiment, to shape winning Civil War units. 2d Lt. U.S. Grant, on the lighter side, in extra-curricular activities, played the role of Desdemona in Shakespeare's *Othello*.

Lee, at the battle of Resaca de la Palma, was an engineer captain, going on his fortieth year. Lee always took his pet chicken into the field

with him. The hen laid Lee's breakfast egg on Lee's bivouac blankets every morning. Colonel Sylvanus Thayer, West Point Superintendent (1818-1833) set up rules for battle tactics. He made company grade officers more responsible in combat.

At Resaca, American artillery hit the Mexican trench edges with great accuracy. Mexican counter-battery fire was poor. Their rounds flew in the Americans' direction and then bounced along the ground, giving U.S. troops a war-time sport—jumping over the powerless rounds.

U.S. Bulge soldiers had their own game—snowball throwing—when the Germans were not looking. The American fires' accuracy caused much chaparral and other plants to catch fire, obscuring visibility for General Zachary Taylor, army commander, and his field grade officers. Taylor and his top officers literally lost track of the battle. The only officers who knew what was going on were the company officers. To the man the West Pointers performed the same maneuvers without consulting with lateral forces or by higher command direction. Thayer's training had kicked in. Bulge veterans can fully appreciate this happening, as they were involved in similar situations about 100 years later. . .

The plot also includes factual information on the supply side, including the shoddy uniforms (the word "shoddy" was first used in the Mexican War to describe Army uniforms—they fell apart soon after being issued; boots came unglued in the first rain). At least the Mexican War soldiers got something—in the Bulge combat troops did not get combat boots until after the battle. Anecdotes about the military-industry complex, spies, traitors, fill out the story. *FIX* is a good winter read for Bulge veterans. VBOBers will see many parallels in the Mexican experience. *FIX BAYONETS - CHARGE!* can be obtained from Commonwealth Publications, 9764-45th Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada TOE 5C5. \$8.45, including shipping and handling.

*Reviewer Cmdr. J. Bryant Starke is head of a Sons of Confederate Veterans unit in northern Virginia. He has held many SCV national and state posts. He has written extensively about the Mexican and Civil Wars.*

**CHECK MAILING LABEL FOR DUES DATE!**

# BATTLE OF THE BULGE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Sales have been brisk and a number of questions have been asked which may be of interest to others: **Can certificates still be ordered?** The answer is **yes**. They make wonderful gifts. Certificates can be ordered at anytime. **Can I order additional certificates for my children/grandchildren?** Again, the answer is **yes**. **Can I order certificates to give to the widow or off spring of a buddy I served with?** **Yes**, if you will certify that he/she was entitled to the Ardennes Battle Credit. **What about those who were Killed in Action or Missing in Action?** A **specially worded certificate** is available for those who made the Ultimate Sacrifice or did not return; however, you must certify the date and location. They are a wonderful tribute to give to the widow or next of kin. **Is there something to mount these on?** **Yes**, there is a simulated walnut plaque with an acrylic overlay and decorative tacks to mount the certificate. Framing is \$29.95 plus \$8.00 shipping and can be secured from John D Bowen, 613 Chichester Lane, Silver Spring Maryland 20904-3331, Telephone 301-384-6533. John will mount the certificate, without additional charge, if you send him your certificate or if you order the plaque at the same time as the certificate is ordered. Just check "hold for framing" on the order blank. Checks for the plaque should be made out separately to John D. Bowen.

What others have to say about the Certificates:

*"The plaque arrived in perfect condition and it is a beauty. It immediately became a centerpiece in my home. My children and grandchildren all expressed delight over the plaque..." Henry F Tiano, Salem Oregon.*

*"I received the wonderful certificate. Words can't describe how I feel about it. I am so proud. I want to thank you for the work you put into this..." Bob Charles, New Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

*"...Thanks for your persistent effort preparing and distributing this fine item." David H Jones, Denver, Colorado.*

*"The certificate/plaque came today and its soooo beautiful, and you did such a fine job, we do thank you so much. I have a friend coming from Scotland in a few weeks and can't wait to show the plaque to her..." Linda & Harold Fleming, Temple Hills, Maryland.*

*"Thank you for the VBOB plaque you put together for me . What a beautiful frame, one anyone should be proud to hang on their wall..." Donald Champlain, Melbourne, Florida.*

*"This is to advise that our VBOB plaque arrived in good condition Aug 29th! To say that we are delighted would be a gross understatement! You are to be commended for an excellent job, done so graciously. It is on the wall of our study, along with numerous other plaques, etc - and everyone who sees it expresses enthusiasm for the beauty and significance of the handsome certificate.... Congratulations to you and others involved." Wayne E Soliday, Sun City, Arizona.*

## VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE CERTIFICATE ORDER BLANK

I request an 11" x 17" Certificate and certify that I received credit for the Ardennes Campaign during my military service. I would like the following information on the certificate: Check here if VBOB member \_\_\_\_ (although not required.)

First Name	MI	Last Name	Serial Number
Organization: Company, Battalion and/or Regiment, Division		Rank (Optional)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hold for framing information	<input type="checkbox"/> Killed in action	<input type="checkbox"/> Died of Wounds Received	

**MAILING INFORMATION:**

Name	Telephone Number
Street Address	Apt No.
City	State
	Zip + 4 Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and date

**Make checks or money orders in the amount of \$15.00 for each certificate payable to VBOB and mail to: VBOB, PO Box 11129, Arlington, VA 22210-2129. \*\*\*\*\* Checks for mounting in the amount of \$37.95 should be payable to John D. Bowen, 613 Chichester Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20904-3331 (Telephone: 301-384-6533).**

# VBOB QUARTERMASTER

## ORDER FORM

November

Dear QM Customers: This is the last issue before the upcoming holidays – If you are planning to buy something for a holiday present, please get your orders to me as early as possible (before December 1st). I wish you all Happy Holidays and a wonderful New Year! -- Lynne

Please ship the following items to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (first) \_\_\_\_\_ (last) \_\_\_\_\_ (phone #-will call only if there is a problem)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ (no.) \_\_\_\_\_ (street) \_\_\_\_\_ (city) \_\_\_\_\_ (state) \_\_\_\_\_ (zip)

Item Description	Price Each	Quantity	Total Price
Patch - 3"	\$ 4.50		\$
Patch - 4"	\$ 5.50		\$
Decal - 4"	\$ 1.25		\$
Windshield Logo - 4"	\$ 1.25		\$
Stickers (10) - 1 1/4"	10 for \$1.25		\$
Baseball Cap w/Logo Patch - Navy only	\$ 10.00		\$
Windbreaker w/4" VBOB Patch (Navy only) <i>Please circle size (they run a little snug):</i> S M L XL XXL XXXL <i>(XXL and XXXL - see prices)</i>	\$ 25.00 (S, M, L and XL) \$ 26.00 for XXL \$ 27.00 for XXXL		\$
Lapel Pin - 1/2"	\$ 5.00		\$
Large VBOB Logo Neck Medallion w/Ribbon	\$ 20.00		\$
Mini VBOB Logo Medal w/Ribbon (pin on type)	\$ 8.50		\$
VBOB Logo Belt Buckle - Silver tone or Gold tone <i>(Please circle choice)</i>	\$ 16.00		\$
VBOB Logo Bolo Tie - Silver tone or Gold tone <i>(Please circle choice)</i>	\$ 16.00		\$
VBOB License Plate Frame w/Logos - White plastic w/Black printing	\$ 5.00		\$
VBOB 100 Sheet Notepad w/Logo - "This Note Is From... A Veteran of the Battle of the Bulge" - White paper with Blue printing	\$ 3.00		\$
<i>Memorable Bulge Incidence Book*</i> - This is a compilation of all of the MBIs that have been published in the <i>Bugle</i> from 1991 through 1994 (Book is not bound - it is three hole punched, you provide the binder)	\$ 15.00*		\$

Only Cash, Check or Money Order Accepted

Make Checks Payable to "VBOB" - Mail Orders to VBOB-QM, PO Box 11129, Arlington, VA 22210-2129

DO NOT INCLUDE ANY OTHER MONIES WITH QM PAYMENT

Shipping and Handling:

\$0.00 to \$5.00 - \$ 2.00

\$5.01 to \$10.00 - \$ 3.00

\$10.01 and over - \$ 4.00

\*The S&H is already included in the MBI cost. If ordering other items with the MBI, do not add the MBI cost of \$15.00 into the price for S&H.

Cost of Items: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

S&H: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Date Mailed: \_\_\_\_\_

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Check No.: \_\_\_\_\_





# VETERANS of the BATTLE of the BULGE

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## NOVEMBER, 1996



## REMEMBER OUR HEROES ON THE DAY OF THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE--DECEMBER 16TH

- Detach and Mail -

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Do not write above this line

Do not write above this line

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**  
VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE  
P.O. Box 11129, Arlington, Virginia 22210-2129  
**Annual Dues \$15**

**New Member**     **Renewal - Member #** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*All new members, please provide the following information:*

Campaigns \_\_\_\_\_

Units(s) to which assigned during period December 16, 1944-January 25, 1945 - Division \_\_\_\_\_

Regiment \_\_\_\_\_ Battalion \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Make check or money order payable to VBOB  
and mail with this application to above address.*

Applicants Signature \_\_\_\_\_

RECRUITER (Optional)